Militarism and Statecraft

Munroe Smith

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MILITARISM AND STATECRAFT

BY

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"The art of war, in its highest point of view, is policy . . . a policy which fights battles instead of writing notes. . . . According to this view . . . it is an irrational proceeding . . . to consult professional soldiers on the plan of a war. . . ." CLAUSEWITZ

"If we attack, the whole weight of the imponderables, which weigh much heavier than material weights, will be on the side of our adversaries." BISMARCK

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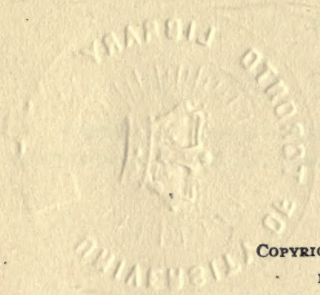

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MUNROE SMITH

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PREFACE

Of the articles which the author has published during the present war, the four that are included in this volume seem to him to have a certain connection and sequence. The first, "Military Strategy versus Diplomacy," deals with the outbreak of the European continental war; the second, "Diplomacy versus Military Strategy," with the widening of the conflict, through British intervention, into a world war extending over the eastern hemisphere; the third, "The German Theory of Warfare," with the further expansion of the conflict, through the intervention of countries that had desired and striven for nearly three years to remain neutral, notably our own country, into a war that already includes among the belligerents by far the greater part of the inhabitants of both hemispheres.

In each of these articles it is the writer's aim not so much to trace the course of events as to seek for the influences that determined events. In the first two papers, which are based chiefly

on a study of the diplomatic material, the causes that precipitated the war are found in the triumph, at Berlin and at Vienna, of military over political views and considerations in the conduct of negotiations. The criticism of Teutonic diplomacy is based upon a standard that cannot be impugned as either unpractical or anti-German: it is based on Bismarck's theories and practice. In the third paper, the gradual union of peace-loving nations into something very like a World Vigilance Committee, for the suppression of German lawlessness and the maintenance of order, is brought into connection with the triumph at Berlin of military over political views and considerations in the conduct of the war.

These three papers deal with the immediate causes of the outbreak and extension of the war. The fourth, "German Land Hunger," examines the less direct but more decisive causes of the war, which are found chiefly in the desires and illusions that had been developing for at least half a century in the German national mind.

All these essays are at bottom studies of the German mind. The writer's effort is primarily not to condemn nor to excuse but to understand. The greater part of the present volume is devoted to a study of the German military mind, and of

the difference between the political and the military mind. The last paper traces the growth among the German people of national lust for power and of the illusions that accompanied and fostered national ambition—illusions of racial superiority and of a German mission to advance the welfare of the world.

Neither in German militarism nor in German national desires and illusions has the author been able to find anything unprecedented or novel, anything that does not exist or has not at some time existed among other nations, except—and the exception is important—in degree and in extent. The military mind, in so far as it tends to differ from the non-military mind, is everywhere the same, alike in its special point of view and in its special tendencies. In no other nation, however, has military reasoning been pushed with a consistency so remorseless to its last logical conclusions, and in no other nation have these conclusions found so general an acceptance outside of military circles. In no other nation, again, has national ambition been so rapidly and so widely diffused as in Germany; in no other nation have the accompanying and fostering illusions become equally prevalent; and in no other nation can we find an equally general unscrupulousness in the approval

of all means that seem adapted to reach the ends desired.

For these phenomena the author has not endeavoured fully to account in any of the essays included in this volume. The problem is so complex that a claim to have solved it would be preposterous. One can offer only a contribution. Direct governmental control of primary and secondary education; indirect governmental control of the attitude of university teachers, of publicists and of journalists, through an ingenious and far-reaching system of titles and decorations—these factors help to explain the popular acceptance of militarist and annexationist views, but they do not explain the genesis of these views. Nor does governmental influence fully explain their rapid and general acceptance. Treitschke and Bernhardi might plant, German bureaucracy might water, but the mental soil and climate must have helped to give the increase.

There has slowly developed in the author's mind, partly through re-examination of his experiences and impressions during three years of university study in Germany, partly through long familiarity with German historical and legal literature, and partly as the result of a recent intensive study of German militarist and annex-

ationist writers, a conviction that there are fundamental differences between the Germans and the people of most other countries in their attitude towards sentiment, whether personal or general, and in their view of the relation between ideals and the practical conduct of life.

In matters of social and particularly of international conduct, the Germans seem to attach undue weight, not to reason indeed, but to formal logical reasoning. In their reasoning about conduct, they endeavour, so far as they can, to ignore sentiment, which they regard as a disturbing and misleading factor. The proper function of sentiment, in their opinion, is to furnish heat for the pursuit of aims determined by cold reasoning. Reasoning, however, is a most untrustworthy guide in matters of social conduct. In spite of the soundness of the process, the conclusions reached are more likely to be wrong than right, because the data on which conduct should reasonably be based are too numerous and too complex to be assembled and co-ordinated in our consciousness. Hence the premises from which we reason are always incomplete and are commonly one-sided. On the other hand, in forming what used to be called our "intuitive" judgments, we seem to utilize subconsciously more data than

we can possibly marshall and examine in our conscious reasoning. And the greater value of those general judgments which are embodied in general sentiments, their superior trustworthiness as compared with the judgments or sentiments of any individual or of any particular social class, is perhaps to be explained on the ground that, in the long run, nearly all the relevant data are utilized.

The Latins, the French especially, are commonly thought to be a reasoning people. In matters of conduct, however, they seem rather to employ logical forms of statement to justify their judgments than to rely upon logical reasoning to determine their action. At the extreme pole of opposition to the Germans stand the English, who not only are largely controlled in their conduct by general sentiments, but also distrust and avoid logical reasoning in practical affairs. And if an Englishman undertakes to determine a suitable line of conduct in any situation by logical reasoning and reaches conclusions which are opposed to those general sentiments which he shares, he is disinclined to act on any such conclusions. If he is a careful thinker, he is inclined to doubt the correctness or the sufficiency of his premises. German thinkers, on the other hand, are inclined to accept as true all logical deductions from

accepted premises. If these deductions seem startling, even shocking, Germans are less inclined than men of other nations to re-examine their premises. They adhere to their deductions and claim that they have, in higher degree than other nations, the courage of their convictions.

This, I think, is one reason why they push to such extremes their theory of the absolute sovereignty of the national state and their theory of ruthlessness in warfare.

Conduct determined by logical reasoning from one-sided premises is not only socially injurious but also unwise. Disregard of general sentiments, of the imponderables, brings its own punishment. This has been notably illustrated, as the author has endeavoured to show, in the harm the Germans have done to their own cause by the way in which they started the war and by the manner in which they have conducted it. Nothing could be more logical than the German invasion of Belgium; but it proved to be a blunder, even from the point of view of military results. The same is true of the burning of the best part of Louvain, of air raids upon undefended places, of the sinking without warning of the *Lusitania* and other enemy merchant vessels, and of the destruction of Dutch, Norwegian, American, and other neutral

vessels. The same is true, apparently, of the use of poisonous gases and jets of flame against the armed enemy. Some, at least, of these innovations are not only shockingly cruel but also clearly illegal. When it comes to the imponderables, the legality or illegality of military action is, as defenders of Germany have asserted, "a secondary consideration," but in a sense quite different from that in which they use the phrase. It is a consideration secondary to that of humanity or inhumanity. It is not, however, a negligible consideration, because legality or illegality is at least one of the elements that enter into and help to determine general sentiment and opinion.

In the British conduct of the war the weight of the imponderables has been more adequately recognized. The best illustration of British practical wisdom is to be found in the British attitude towards relief of the Belgians. Had Great Britain shut out all relief, Germany must either have fed the Belgians, which would have imposed a serious strain on its resources, or let the Belgians starve. The latter course would have been logical, but it would have been a greater blunder than any that Germany has yet committed.

Sentiment, deliberately excluded by Germans

from its proper influence on their conduct, plays a disproportionate part in their ideals. Some of these are simply abnormal developments of sentiments in themselves normal. The German idealization of *das Deutschtum*, for example, which is based on the belief that their nation is immeasurably superior to all others, is only an insane exaggeration of the national pride that is inseparable from the normal sentiment of patriotism. What is more important, the attitude of the Germans towards their ideals is mainly sentimental. They derive an æsthetic pleasure from the contemplation of their ideals—a pleasure which is akin to the enjoyment they derive from music and is almost equally remote from practical affairs. Precisely because they exclude sentiment from its proper influence on conduct, their sentimental enjoyment of ethical ideals is stronger than that of other people. This, I think, is the reason why they honestly believe that they are more idealistic than other nations. This is also the reason why other nations justly accuse them of sentimentality, which may perhaps be described as sentiment at play, not at work. The Germans have beautiful ideals of the home and of family life; but all the sacrifices on this altar are made by their women. William II told Ambassador Gerard

that he wished to wage war in a "knightly" manner, but that his enemies made this impossible.[1] Here again, it seems, all sacrifices to the ideal were to be vicarious.

The first of the articles included in this volume grew out of a paper read before the Phi Beta Kappa Alumni of New York, in December, 1914. It was first published in 1915, as was the second article. The other two articles were published in the autumn of 1917.

The first and fourth articles originally appeared in the *Political Science Quarterly;* the second and the third in the *North American Review.* The first article was twice revised and expanded for translation.[2] It has been subjected to further revision for this volume. The other articles also have been revised and considerably expanded. In their revision the author has been able to make use of criticisms and suggestions from friends on both sides of the Atlantic. To his colleague Mr. Henry F. Munro he owes special gratitude, not only for valuable suggestions but also for aid in the irksome task of reading proof.

[1] *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 340.

[2] French and German translations were published by Payot et Cie., Lausanne; Dutch, Danish, and Swedish translations by Nelson and Sons, London.

The publication of the first article led to a correspondence with Col. Theodore Roosevelt. The questions discussed in his letters are so interesting in themselves and so germane to the subject of the article that, with his kind consent, the correspondence is printed as an appendix to this volume.

MUNROE SMITH.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK CITY,
December, 1917.

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MILITARY STRATEGY VERSUS DIPLOMACY

IN BISMARCK'S TIME AND AFTERWARDS

It is the purpose of this essay to compare the conduct of Austro-German diplomacy before the outbreak of the World War with that of Prussian and German diplomacy in the Bismarckian period; and, in so far as the more recent diplomacy was less successful than the earlier, to indicate what seems to have been one of the principal obstacles to its success.

It would be a grateful as well as an easy task to treat this subject from an idealistic and humanitarian point of view, and to assume that it is the duty of governments to render war impossible. Such a discussion, however, would leave us where we started, in a world not yet realized. War persistently recurs, and in certain contingencies, it seems to be unavoidable. In the existing

world-order—or in the absence of any satisfactory world-order—the first duty of the statesman is to protect the interests of his own country, and his action is to be judged neither on pacifist nor on militarist premises, but according to the standards of approved political practice.

I shall hardly be accused of adopting a utopian standard for the conduct of international politics if I base my criticism mainly on the practice and doctrines of Prince Bismarck. Some German writers have remarked that the more pacific theories of this statesman, formulated for the most part after 1871, are not in harmony with his foreign policy before that time. One writer[1] has attributed them to "a certain weariness as regarded warlike complications," ascribable to advancing age. If, however, we note certain distinctions upon which Bismarck himself insisted, his practice and his doctrines do not appear to be inconsistent.

I

Bismarck held that a state may rightly make war for the realization or defence of vital national interests, but that it should not make war solely

[1] General Baron von Gebsattel, "Das Gebot der Stunde," in the Pan-Germanist review, *Der Panther*, no. 10, 1915.

to increase its power, much less to preserve or augment its prestige. The wars which Prussia waged under Bismarck's political guidance, particularly the war against Austria in 1866, unquestionably increased Prussia's power, but he invariably defended these wars on the ground that they were necessary for the establishment of German national unity. In his memoirs he tells us that in 1863 the Emperor Alexander II of Russia proposed to Prussia an offensive alliance against Austria, and that he advised against the acceptance of this offer. He explains that, if the alliance had been concluded, the Prussian government

> would have waged a Prussian war of conquest, but the sinews of Prussia's national policy would have been cut. In the effort to give to the German nation, through unity, the possibility of an existence corresponding to its historical importance lay the weightiest argument for justifying the German "fratricidal war." If the struggle between the German peoples had been resolved upon solely in the interest of strengthening the separate state of Prussia, the renewal of such a war would have been inevitable.[1]

[1] *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. ii., p. 68; *Bismarck, The Man and the Statesman*, vol. ii., pp. 76, 77. In the following notes the German version of this work is cited as "Memoirs" and the English as "translation." The translations in this paper are by the writer.

In Bismarck's speeches and writings he frequently distinguishes between a policy that aims to realize or defend national interests (*Interessenpolitik*) and one which aims at power (*Machtpolitik*), and he consistently employs the latter term as one of censure. "Working for prestige" (*auf Prestige wirtschaften*) is a phrase which he often uses, and which carries a still stronger note of censure.

What Bismarck would have thought of the promotion of *Kultur* as a justification of any policy may perhaps be inferred from his protest against calling the internal struggle between Prussia and the Roman Catholic Church a *Kulturkampf*. "We are contending," he said, "not for *Kultur*, but for the political interests of Prussia and Germany."[1]

Even if a war seems adapted to promote national interests, the statesman must of course consider the importance of the interests to be subserved and the chances of victory. In modern European conditions the latter question is not to be answered by considering solely the military strength and economic resources of the single country and of its immediate adversary; there must be consideration also of alliances and of neutralities. It is here that the special task of

[1] Concerning the relation of *Kultur* to civilization, see below, pp. 215–220.

war diplomacy begins. It is the duty of the diplomatist to make sure that his country shall not be brought into conflict with a coalition of superior power. In the condition of latent war in which Europe has been living for centuries, the problem of alliances is a perpetual one. In the continuous peril of open war in which Europe has lived during the last half-century, this problem is of special importance. Alliances are arranged in advance, and for terms of years, even when war is not in sight. When war is in sight, the diplomatist has to assure himself that his allies will recognize their treaty obligations; he has to detach, if possible, the enemy's allies from active support of the hostile cause; and he must seek to gain the moral if not the material support of probably neutral states. He must make sure, at all events, that none of these probably neutral states shall join forces with the enemy. If he cannot achieve these results, if he is not reasonably assured that superior or at least equal force will be on his side—and on this point he is not justified in hoping or guessing—it is his clear duty, at any sacrifice except that of the national honour, to strive to avert the war or at least to postpone it as long as possible. And he must not confuse with true honour the sham honour known as

prestige. The line of distinction is undoubtedly a narrow one, but he must strive to observe it. It was this line that Thiers tried to draw when, on July 15, 1870, he told the French ministry and his fellow deputies that France was going to war "on a question of sensitiveness."

The diplomatist has also to see to it that his country shall not appear to be responsible for the outbreak of war. In spite of the periodical recurrence of war throughout human history, and in spite of the fact that war brings out, with some of the basest traits of human nature, also many of the noblest, the great majority of civilized human beings regard it as abnormal and evil. In some cases it may be regarded as a necessary evil, or as the lesser or least of threatened evils, but it is not generally recognized as good in itself. There has indeed always been an opposite theory; eloquent voices have always been raised in praise of war; but in modern times at least such praise finds no general echo even in periods of peace, and when war comes its laudation excites resentment. This was Bismarck's attitude. "I regard even a victorious war," he wrote, "as in itself always an evil, which statecraft must take pains to spare the nations."[1]

[1] Circular Note of the German Foreign Office, July 29, 1870.

In the common opinion, responsibility for war attaches primarily to the aggressor.[1] An aggressive war may be justifiable, but the burden of proof is on the aggressor.

The most obvious justification of aggressive war is to be found in the adversary's breach of a treaty. No nation, it is commonly urged, can be bound perpetually by a treaty that contravenes its interests; but if the treaty secures important interests of the other contracting party, its repudiation gives the latter a formal right to declare war. And it is not regarded as correct practice to denounce a treaty without previous negotiation,[2] much less to break a treaty by aggressive military action. It is hardly too much to say that this latter course is generally regarded as immoral.

Even if the diplomatist does not share the general prejudice against aggression or the general

[1] "Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin." *Romeo and Juliet*, act i., scene i.

[2] "The plenipotentiaries of North Germany, of Austria-Hungary, of Great Britain, of Italy, of Russia, and of Turkey, assembled today in conference, recognize that it is an essential principle of the law of nations that no power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting powers by means of an amicable arrangement." Declaration of the London Conference of 1871. See Lammasch, *Das Völkerrecht nach dem Kriege* (Christiania, 1917), pp. 142–158.

feeling regarding the obligation of treaties, the fact that these sentiments are general obliges him to take them into account. In fact, they always are taken into account, if not in the negotiations which precede a war, at least upon the outbreak of hostilities. At this last moment, each belligerent government seeks to persuade its own people and the world at large that its cause is just.

The defensive position has political advantages, both at home and abroad. It has also its military advantages. An attacking nation, according to the expert testimony of Bismarck, will not fight at the outset with the same spirit and fire as a nation attacked. War is barbarism, and a nation at war readily reverts to the attitude of the barbaric community, which presents an extraordinary uniformity and solidity of feeling and of opinion; but this reversion is more rapid and more universal in a nation attacked than in a nation attacking. As Bismarck puts it:

> If our ordained authorities regard the war as necessary and have declared it, it will be carried on with all our fighting edge, and perhaps to victory, as soon as our men have come under fire and seen blood. But there will not be behind it the same vim and fire as in a war in which we are attacked.[1]

[1] Speech of February 6, 1888.

If this statement is open to any criticism, it is that it fails to note the possibility that, at the outbreak of a war, the people of an attacking state may accept, without evidence or even against evidence, the assurance of their "ordained authorities" that the adversary is the aggressor. In such cases the truth, seen only by a few, filters very slowly through the mass of the nation.

Among nations not primarily involved, and therefore less easily deceived, there is always sympathy with the nation assailed and prejudice against the nation that appears to be the aggressor, unless it is clear that the latter has just cause for war. Accordingly, the duty of the diplomatist to keep his country free from the semblance of aggression is closely connected with the problem of securing outside support and averting a hostile coalition. International alliances are seldom by their terms offensive: as a rule they stipulate for support only against attack. If there be doubt which of the original belligerents has been guilty of aggression, the first overt act of hostility or of grave provocation may be decisive. It is especially likely to be decisive if the allied country is under a form of government in which the action of the executive is largely controlled by public opinion. Much the same may be said as regards

nations not previously in alliance with either of the original antagonists. If the interests of any such nation tend to draw it to one side or to the other, it will be somewhat less likely to support the aggressor than to intervene on the side of the nation attacked. This probability, also, increases in direct proportion to the influence of public opinion upon governmental action.

To sum up: what the diplomatist gains by maintaining the defensive attitude is not only the more rapid development of the fighting spirit in his own country, but also the greater probability that the alliances of his country will hold while those of his adversary will not, and that states not in alliance with either belligerent will support his country if their interests may thereby be promoted, or will remain neutral although their interests tend to draw them to the adversary's side. These advantages are indicated and the corresponding disadvantages of aggression are summed up in Bismarck's famous saying:

> If we attack, the whole weight of the imponderables, which weigh much heavier than material weights, will be on the side of our adversaries, whom we have attacked.[1]

[1] Speech of February 6, 1888.

One further consideration, already indicated, should perhaps be emphasized. The contemporary verdict regarding responsibility for war is necessarily based upon the record; it takes cognizance only of notorious facts and of allegations that can be proved. This verdict may be erroneous. History may set it aside. For the statesman, however, it is not the final judgment of history but the immediate reaction of contemporary opinion that is of weight. "Assent is power, belief the soul of fact"[1]; and belief does not await the capture of elusive truth but is content to rest upon the obvious inference. All this is implied in Bismarck's cynically frank story of the editing of the Ems dispatch. After reading his condensed version to Moltke and Roon and explaining that it would have "the effect of a red rag upon the Gallic bull," he added:

> Success depends essentially upon the impressions that are produced in our own and other countries by the origin of the war; it is important that we be the ones attacked.[2]

[1] Wordsworth, "Memorials of a Tour in Italy. IV: At Rome —Regrets—In allusion to Niebuhr and other modern historians."

[2] Memoirs, vol. ii., p. 91; translation, vol. ii., p. 101. Doubts expressed by German historians regarding this Bismarck-Moltke-Roon conference do not here concern us. For our present purposes it is sufficient that Bismarck claimed to have made the statement cited.

The Emperor William II is reported to have said that it was of little consequence what really happened; what counted was what was believed to have happened. The statesman, however, must not assume that contemporary opinion outside of his own country will be controlled by his assertions. He can secure assent and command belief only by keeping himself right on the face of the record.

II

With Bismarck as its premier and minister of foreign affairs, Prussia waged three wars. In each instance, Bismarck was reasonably sure of his alliances and of his neutralities: in none of these wars was his country confronted by a hostile coalition of superior force. In the war against Denmark (1864) Prussia had the support of Austria, and no other power intervened. In the Austro-Prussian war (1866) Austria was supported by the majority of the smaller German states, but Prussia had the assistance of Italy. Prussia was also assured of the friendly neutrality of Russia, and Bismarck was reasonably certain that, at least at the outset, France would remain neutral. In the war against France (1870) the

North German Federation, which Bismarck had formed in 1867 and of which he was chancellor, had all the South German states on its side, and Russia had promised to prevent Austria from aiding France.

In each of these wars, Prussia's adversary either had broken a fairly recent treaty or was chargeable with the first overt act of aggression. In each case, accordingly, Prussia's position was correct, on the face of the record.

Denmark had violated in 1863 a treaty concluded with Prussia and Austria in 1852. Denmark's action impaired important German interests, because it undertook, contrary to its promises, to incorporate the German inhabitants of Schleswig in the Danish state.[1]

In 1866, Austria had broken the Treaty of Gastein, concluded between Austria and Prussia in 1865. Austria indeed accused Prussia of breaking this treaty, but the Austrian breach preceded the Prussian. Austria also was chargeable with the first overt act of hostility in demanding that the German Confederation should employ military force against Prussia. It was tolerably clear at the time that Prussia was really forcing

[1] See Munroe Smith, *Bismarck and German Unity* (2d ed. Columbia University Press, 1910), pp. 24–31.

Austria into war, but on the face of the record Austria was the aggressor.[1]

In 1870, after the withdrawal of the Hohenzollern candidacy for the throne of Spain, the French foreign minister demanded guaranties for the future. Ollivier, who was at the time the French prime minister, says that this demand could be interpreted only as intended to bring on war.[2] Bismarck published the French demand and King William's refusal, and France declared war. We know today that Bismarck had promoted the Spanish candidacy. We know, further, that the French demand for guaranties would probably have been dropped, in consequence of the remonstrances of neutral powers, if Bismarck had not cut off this line of retreat by the form in which he published the news of the French demand and of its refusal.[3] This, as he intended, made it impossible for the French government to retreat from its ill-chosen position without loss of prestige. In the light of our present knowledge, responsibility for that war cannot be placed wholly on either party. War was desired on both sides

[1] See Munroe Smith, *Bismarck*, pp. 31–36.

[2] Ollivier, *L'Empire Liberal*, vol. xiv., p. 261. See also Ollivier, *The Franco-Prussian War* (a volume of extracts from *L'Empire Liberal*, translated by G. B. Ives, 1912), pp. 224–25.

[3] See Munroe Smith, *Bismarck*, pp. 49, 50, 53–57.

of the Rhine. At the time, however, it seemed clear that France was the aggressor, and that Germany was waging a purely defensive war.

In none of the wars conducted under Bismarck's diplomatic guidance was Prussia assured of British neutrality. Under the British parliamentary system, governmental promises are hard to secure and, if given, are accompanied by saving clauses. That a British ministry is usually inclined to keep its hands free, as regards international policy, is largely due to the consideration that it can not carry out any programme unless assured of public support. It may indeed place Parliament and the country in such a position that support can not well be refused; but in so doing it subjects itself and the party it represents to serious political risks. In any attempt to secure British neutrality, accordingly, Bismarck realized that the immediate reaction of British public opinion was of the highest importance; and in each of the three wars the formal correctness of the Prussian position proved to be of great value. In 1864 British sympathies were with Denmark. It was not in the British interest that any portion of the coast of the North Sea should pass out of the control of a small state into that of a great state. Denmark, however, refused to recognize

its treaty obligations; Prussia was supported by Austria; and Great Britain could secure no continental support against this combination. Great Britain accordingly gave Denmark only diplomatic support. In 1866 no British interest was at stake in the war between the two leading German powers, and, as between Austria and Italy, British sympathy was with Italy. In 1870 no British interest seemed to be involved in the struggle between Germany and France. And even if British interests had been involved, it would have been difficult for the British government to find any decent pretext for war. Not only did Bismarck cheerfully pledge observance of Belgian neutrality, but, shortly after the outbreak of the war, he published the draft of an unratified treaty between France and Prussia providing, in certain contingencies, for the annexation of Belgium by France; and he invited the representatives of the powers in Berlin to satisfy themselves, by inspection of the manuscript, that the draft was in the handwriting of the French ambassador, M. Benedetti. The effect upon British opinion was all that Bismarck could desire.

It should be added that, in proportion as it became clear that Prussia was solving the problem of German unity, the public opinion of the

world, fully convinced of the legitimacy of the principle of nationality, became increasingly favourable to the Prussian policy.

The rapidity with which the German Unity Wars were ended—the total duration of active hostilities in the three wars was but twelve months—is popularly ascribed to the efficient organization of the Prussian army and the able strategy of its commanders. No small part of the credit, however, perhaps the greater part, belongs to Bismarck's diplomacy—to the skill with which he made and held alliances and arranged or assured neutralities, and to the relative moderation of the terms imposed upon Prussia's defeated enemies.

III

The chief aim of Bismarck's diplomacy, after the establishment of the German Empire, was succinctly stated by him in 1882:

> If I can claim any merit in my conduct of foreign policy, it is that since the year 1871 I have prevented the formation of any coalition of superior power against Germany.[1]

This merit he was still able to claim at the close of his career. When he was removed from office

[1] Speech of June 14, 1882.

by William II, in 1890, Germany, Austria, and Italy were in open defensive alliance. By a secret treaty, moreover—the so-called "re-insurance treaty," which first became known in 1896,[1] —Germany and Russia had agreed that each would observe a benevolent neutrality if the other were attacked by a third power. The chief advantage which this network of treaties gave Germany was the complete isolation of France. Should Germany have to face a French attack, its back was fully protected. A further advantage of these treaties was to enable Germany, in any dispute between Austria and Russia, to assert the position of a disinterested party and, virtually, to act as an umpire. If Russia attacked Austria, Germany was bound to support Austria. If Austria attacked Russia, Germany was bound to observe a benevolent neutrality. And it was

[1] The existence of this treaty until 1890, and its non-renewal in that year, were first made known in an article in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, October 24, 1896. (See Munroe Smith, "Bismarck's Latest Revelation," in *Harper's Weekly*, December 12, 1896.) In 1890 and the following years it was no secret that the *Hamburger Nachrichten* was Bismarck's special organ; but his personal responsibility for particular articles was a matter of conjecture. His relation to this newspaper is at last definitely stated, and the more important articles inspired or dictated by him are reproduced, in Hofmann, *Fürst Bismarck, 1890–98* (1913). The article of October 24, 1896, is reprinted in vol. ii., pp. 370–72.

for Germany to determine, in case of an Austro-Russian war, which was the attacking party and what were Germany's treaty obligations. In the seeming tangle of agreements, Germany really had its hands almost wholly free.

The integrity of the Austrian Empire was, in Bismarck's view, a German interest of the first order. Germany's alliance with Austria (1879) was not only older but also closer than the alliance of the Central Empires with Italy (1882). Against Italy, Austria was thought to need no aid, and in the treaty of 1879 Germany promised none. Against Russia, Austria might need support, and that support was pledged in the event of a Russian attack. The integrity of the Austrian Empire, however, could best be secured by averting the danger of such an attack; and the maintenance of the peace of Europe was, in Bismarck's opinion, of prime importance to Germany. By bringing Italy into alliance with the Central Empires, the danger of war was sensibly lessened. By the German-Russian treaty the peace of Europe, so far as treaty arrangements could assure it, seemed assured. In 1887 Bismarck explained to the Reichstag, and to Europe:

> The difficult part of our task is not to keep peace ourselves with Austria or with Russia, but

> to keep peace between Austria and Russia. There are, in fact, rival and competing interests which make it more difficult for these two friends of ours to keep peace with each other than it is for us to keep peace with each of them. It is our task to smooth out these difficulties, so far as possible, and to act in both cabinets as the advocate of peace.[1]

The danger that the conflicting interests of Austria and of Russia in the Balkans might draw these powers into war was minimized by the recognition of a Russian sphere of influence in the eastern portion of the peninsula and of an Austrian sphere in the western. This arrangement was established by the two powers concerned at Reichstadt, where, before beginning war against Turkey, Russia secured the neutrality of Austria by agreeing to an eventual Austrian occupation of Bosnia.[2] To this arrangement Germany gave loyal support, notably when Russia's treatment of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria aroused popular resentment in Germany. "What is Bulgaria to us?", Bismarck asked his hearers in the Reichstag.[3] And again:

> Bulgaria, that little country between the Danube and the Balkans, is assuredly not an object of

[1] Speech of January 11, 1887.
[2] Bismarck, January 24, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii., p. 5.
[3] Speech of January 11, 1887.

> sufficient magnitude that, on its account, Europe from Moscow to the Pyrenees and from the Baltic to Palermo should be hurried into a war of which no one can foresee the issue. In the end, after the war, we should hardly know what we had been fighting about.[1]

Read "Serbia" for "Bulgaria," and these words might have been spoken in 1914.

The position which Bismarck had obtained for Germany, the central position on the see-saw of Austro-Russian politics, was assuredly capable of being utilized, as Bismarck asserted it was to be utilized, for the preservation of the peace of Europe. Austrian or Russian movements which threatened to disturb the balance of power in the Balkan peninsula could be checked by a very moderate degree of pressure from Berlin. All that was necessary was to insist that each of these powers should refrain from invading the sphere of influence assigned to the other. And so long as Russia could be restrained from attacking Austria, and Germany was not compelled to intervene, there could be no joint action of France and Russia against the Triple Alliance. For this reason, Bismarck tells us, the German-Russian re-insurance treaty (of which Austria and Italy

[1] Speech of February 6, 1888.

were fully cognizant) was welcomed by these powers.

> Our allies indeed had confidence that the Triple Alliance would be able to support a war on two sides, but . . . it seemed to them preferable that a war which would demand from all the continental powers the most monstrous sacrifices in blood, money, and property should be avoided altogether.[1]

The mediatory rôle which Germany had assumed could be played with success only so long as Russia could regard Germany as disinterested. Bismarck maintained that Russia could trust Germany, because Germany had no interest in the Balkans that would justify it in risking "the sound bones of a single Pomeranian musketeer."[2] Not only, in his opinion, had Germany no interest in impeding a Russian movement toward Constantinople,[3] but he believed that

> it would be of advantage to Germany if in one way or another, physically or diplomatically, the Russians established themselves in Constantinople and had to defend it. We should then no longer be in a position to be used by England, and occasionally also by Austria, as the dog to be set barking against Russian lustings for the Bosphorus,

[1] Bismarck, November 1, 1896, in Hofmann, vol. ii., p. 378.
[2] Speech of December 5, 1876.
[3] Bismarck, December 17, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii., p. 187.

but we could wait to see whether Austria was attacked.[1]

Accordingly, in Bismarck's construction:

> The treaty of 1879 (regarding the German-Austrian alliance) related, as against Russia, solely to an eventual attack by that power upon the allies. On the part of Germany, the view consistently represented at Vienna was that the alliance covered only the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, not also its oriental policy against Russia. For this Austria was always advised by Germany to seek protection by separate agreements with equally interested states, such as England and Italy.[2]

The last two utterances cited date from the period of his retirement, when he was in opposition to the policies of his successors. While still in power, however, he had placed the same construction on the treaty between Germany and Austria. In 1887 he said:

[1] Memoirs, vol. ii., p. 263; translation, vol. ii., p. 288.

[2] Bismarck, January 24, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii., p. 4. In an earlier article, April 26, 1890, Bismarck said: "The Triple Alliance covers only the *damnum emergens*, not the *lucrum cessans*, of the powers concerned. Least of all is it Germany's affair to promote ambitious plans of Austria in the Balkans." *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 256. See also article of July 15, 1892, *ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 119. And again July 17, 1892: "Why should the burden of resistance to Russia be rolled off the shoulders of the interested British Empire upon those of the disinterested German Empire?" *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 123.

> Our relations to Austria . . . do not rest on the basis that either of the two nations can be required to put itself and its full power and policy completely at the service of the other. . . . What interests Austria has in Constantinople is for Austria alone to determine. We have none there.[1]

The keystone of Bismarck's entire foreign policy, from the beginning to the end of his official career, was the maintenance of friendly relations with Russia. Without Russian neutrality, the wars which established German unity could not have been waged. So long as Russia was friendly, no dangerous coalition could be formed against the united Germany. In the summer of 1892 he wrote:

> The *Kreuzzeitung* speaks of preparation for the great decisive struggle between Slavs and Teutons. For such a struggle it is necessary to be prepared, but it will never be decisive. As little as the subjection of nearly all Europe by Napoleon I led to a definitive settlement between Latins and Teutons, so little will any finally decisive struggle take place between Slavs and Teutons; and we do not believe that Providence has set these two great peoples side by side without design or with the design that one should be made subject to the other. . . .
>
> To prevent an unnecessary outbreak of war

[1] Speech of January 11, 1887.

between Germany and Russia must remain the chief task of German statecraft.[1]

In his memoirs, which are his political testament, he repeatedly insists upon the necessity and the possibility of maintaining the German-Russian friendship. "With France," he wrote, "we shall never have peace; with Russia, never the necessity of war, unless liberal stupidities or dynastic blunders falsify the situation."[2]

With Great Britain, after 1871, Germany's relations, although scarcely cordial, were usually friendly and were never really strained. The inauguration, in 1884, of a German colonial policy naturally aroused British jealousy, but gave no ground for hostility. In its colonial ventures, Bismarck told Hofmann, Germany should look for "sure advantages without disproportionately great risks, especially without conflict with older and stronger sea powers."[3] This utterance also dates from the period of his retirement; but here again he was only paraphrasing what he had said as chancellor:

[1] Hofmann, vol. ii., pp. 124–125.

[2] Memoirs, vol. i., p. 224; translation, vol. i., p. 247.

[3] Hofmann, vol. i., p. 125. Bismarck's colonial policy was clearly stated in his speech of June 26, 1884. See Munroe Smith, *Bismarck*, pp. 74–76.

> I regard England as our old traditional ally, with whom we have no conflicts of interest. When I say "ally," the word is to be taken in a diplomatic sense; we have no treaties with England; but I wish to keep in touch (*Fühlung*) with England, as we have done for at least one hundred and fifty years, in colonial questions also. And if I were convinced that we were losing touch, I should be careful and try to prevent that happening.[1]

Bismarck's success in establishing alliances and in averting the formation of any hostile coalition against Germany was due, in no small degree, to the spirit and temper in which he conducted Germany's diplomacy. The new Empire, he declared, did not seek to play the part of arbiter nor even that of schoolmaster in Europe.[2] He fully realized, not only the jealousy which new power arouses, but the dangers of new power to its possessor. They resemble, as he himself more than once indicated, the dangers of new wealth to the individual. These, as we all know, are what I once heard Richard Henry Stoddard describe as "the unconscious insolence of conscious opulence," and, associated with this, an extreme sensitiveness to criticism, which may easily manifest itself in increased arrogance. With

[1] Speech of January 26, 1889.
[2] Speech of February 19, 1878.

the similar tendencies of new power we Americans are quite familiar, for we ourselves exhibited them in a thoroughly typical way in the nineteenth century, particularly in the period between the Mexican War and the War of Secession. Even at the close of the century, we must regretfully confess, we had not fully outgrown these tendencies, as was shown in our negotiations with other countries, particularly with Spain. "Shirt-sleeves" diplomacy is quite unmistakably parvenu diplomacy.

To indicate these dangers of new power, Bismarck, as I have said, employed the very comparison which I have developed. In 1890, in an English speech to a body of British shipowners, he said that, in the society of nations, "Germany may be compared to a self-made man, whereas England is as an old aristocratic lord."[1] And when his policy toward Russia was assailed as conciliatory to the point of subservience, he characterized the attitude of his critics as follows:

> No far-seeing reckoning with existing factors of European policy is to characterize German statecraft; its efforts are not to be directed to helping, as far as possible, to avoid wars of which the out-

[1] *The* [London] *Times*, July 3, 1890. See Hofmann, vol. i., p. 279.

come would be incalculable; but Germany should assume, in Europe, an attitude of provocation and play the part of the man who, suddenly enriched and presuming on the dollars in his pocket, tries to trample over everybody.[1]

It is not, I think, too much to say that Bismarck handled the new power of Germany as if it were old power. Temperamentally, he was highly sensitive to criticism; openly, as imperial chancellor, he disregarded it. Attacks in the foreign press, he said, were to him "printer's ink on paper."[2] If any criticisms seemed to require answers, Germany's cause was defended neither by its officials, domestic or foreign, nor by declarations signed by university professors, but by unofficial communications or inspired leading articles in the newspapers, and usually in newspapers that had no overt relations with the German government. What was of greater importance, Bismarck's conduct of foreign affairs was quite in harmony with Mr. Roosevelt's formula: if he carried a big stick, he walked softly. Only against France, whose resentment Germany could not hope to appease, was the big stick occasionally shaken. This happened, usually, when

[1] Bismarck, October 3, 1891, in Hofmann, vol. i., p. 382.
[2] Speech of February 6, 1888.

the exigencies of democratic politics led French public men to indulge in the form of sport which, in American politics, has been known as "twisting the lion's tail."[1] In Germany's dealings with other powers there were no threats and no bluster. Assurances that Germany was one of the "satiated nations" and desired nothing but peace were made more credible by quiet settlement of disputes: witness the manner in which Bismarck handled the conflict with Spain over the Carolines and that with the United States regarding the Samoan Islands.

IV

Before the outbreak of the present war, arrangements were being made in Germany to celebrate, on an extensive scale, the centennial of Bismarck's birth, which fell on April 1, 1915. The celebrations that were actually held were of course much simpler than those that had been planned. In such addresses as were delivered and in the leading articles that appeared in the journals it was

[1] See statement of Thiers in Hohenlohe's diary, July 8, 1875: "I spoke then of the rumours of war. Thiers said those were disseminated from party motives and would increase. Moreover, they would be turned to account for electioneering purposes. We should not allow ourselves to be misled thereby." *Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe*, vol. ii., p. 167; translation, vol. ii., p. 155.

the man of iron and blood rather than the far-seeing statesman whom it seemed appropriate to praise. Any analysis of his conduct of foreign affairs would have been a task of no little delicacy. It would not have been easy to praise his diplomacy without suggesting unfavourable comparisons.

After Bismarck's dismissal from the imperial chancellorship, there was (with one important exception, presently to be noted) no reversal of German foreign policy. There were changes, however, in tone and in manner. There was some rather "big talk" on the part of the emperor, which other nations took for the most part humorously. There were appearances "in shining armour," with occasional shakings of the "mailed fist," which were taken more seriously. Peace was preserved, but on more than one occasion by employing that double-edged and dangerous weapon, the threat of war.

Oversea expansion was pushed more vigorously, and not always in accordance with Bismarck's notion that the flag should follow, not precede, trade.

> When I was chancellor [he told Hofmann] we never stepped in with the protection of the Empire

> until the German trader or colonist had acquired in foreign parts interests of sufficient magnitude and importance; we never hurried on ahead of him.[1]

And Hofmann tells us that when he showed Bismarck the first map of the East Asiatic coast on which the German leasehold of Kiao-chau was marked off, the prince looked at it for some time and then said: "Big enough for all sorts of foolishness."[2] He did not live to hear William II announce that Germany's future lay in the water[3]; and what he would have thought of the effort to get a foothold in Morocco we can only conjecture; but we know that he gave diplomatic support to France in Tunis, on the ground that it was desirable that French attention should be distracted from "the hole in the Vosges." With the Agadir incident fresh in his mind, Hofmann wrote:

> Our Pan-Germanists hold a fundamentally false opinion of Bismarck if they believe that he, if still alive and in office, would have slashed in with the sabre in Morocco, in Persia, or anywhere else, to uphold claims which corresponded rather to the desires of our national expansionists than to the facts of the situation or the rights of Germany.[4]

[1] Hofmann, vol. i., p. 126.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 227.
[3] Speech of June 18, 1901.
[4] Hofmann, vol i., pp. 118–119.

Closely associated with imperialistic expansion is the tendency to take part in world politics even where national interests are not directly involved. The diplomatic intervention of Germany, in unison with Russia and France, to compel Japan, in 1895, to surrender the peninsula of Liao-tung aroused in Bismarck's mind apprehensions which were expressed in two leading articles in the journal which he controlled. If this joint action meant better relations with Russia, it was of advantage; but why should Germany arouse Japanese hostility? To Bismarck, it looked like "working for prestige"; and the second article intimated that he would not have interfered.[1]

There was more than a suggestion of a policy of prestige in several of the speeches subsequently delivered by William II, notably in his assertion:

> The ocean bears witness that, even in the distance and on its further side, without Germany and the German emperor no great decision dare be taken.[2]

The one point in which German foreign policy was distinctly reversed after Bismarck's retirement was in Germany's relations to Austria and to Russia. In 1890 the re-insurance treaty with

[1] May 7 and 23; Hofmann, vol. ii., pp. 298, 302.
[2] Speech of July 3, 1900.

Russia lapsed, by the expiration of the term for which it was concluded, and, although Russia was willing to renew it, the German imperial government decided to abandon it. Count Caprivi, Bismarck was informed, found Germany's treaty relations with Austria and Russia "too complicated." Bismarck admitted, with a certain malice, that the maintenance of these relations "of course required a considerable degree of diplomatic skill."[1] The probable results of this change of policy seemed to Bismarck very grave. He feared that Germany and Russia would steadily drift further apart; and he lived to see this apprehension realized. He feared that Russia, seeking support against the Triple Alliance, would eventually come to an understanding with France; and he lived to see the beginnings of the *entente* between these powers. He believed, and asserted as early as 1891:

> From the moment when the conviction is established in Vienna that the bridge between Germany and Russia is broken down, Austria will assume a different attitude toward the German Empire, and Germany will run the risk of becoming, in a sense, dependent on Austria.[2]

[1] Bismarck, January 24, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii., p. 4.
[2] January 28, 1891, *ibid.*, vol. i., p. 314.

And in the following year he wrote:

> Already there are indications that the attitude of German policy is no longer completely neutral in eastern affairs, as it was formerly to Germany's advantage.[1]

During the later years of his life he repeated his warnings against breaking with Russia and against identifying Germany's interests with those of Austria in the Balkans; and in his memoirs he wrote:

> If the breach, or even the alienation, between us and Russia should seem irremediable, then Vienna would believe itself entitled to make greater claims upon the services of its German ally; first, in the extension of the *casus foederis*, which, up till now, according to the published text, goes no further than defence against a Russian attack upon Austria; secondly, in a request to substitute for the *casus foederis*, as now defined, the representation of Austrian interests in the Balkans and in the East. . . . It is not, however, the duty of the German Empire to lend its subjects, with their goods and their lives, for the realization of its neighbour's aspirations.[2]

In Germany, these warnings fell on deaf ears. Bismarck, of course, was disgruntled; nothing

[1] January 24, 1892, Hofmann, vol. ii., p. 5.

[2] Memoirs, vol. ii., pp. 252–253; translation, vol. ii., pp. 276–277. The clause "according to the published text" seems significant. It suggests possible knowledge, on Bismarck's part, that his successors had assumed formal obligations to support an offensive Austrian policy.

that his successors could do was right; he was simply an old grumbler. For us the question is not whether his utterances were dictated by vanity and vindictiveness or by patriotic solicitude, but whether he was right.

The development of a common German-Austrian policy in the Balkan peninsula, which Bismarck feared, was furthered by the German policy of seeking to develop not only the economic but also the political influence of Germany in the Turkish Empire. The establishment and consolidation of German influence in Turkey could hardly be regarded by Russia in any other light than as an invasion of what Germany and Austria had previously recognized as the Russian sphere of influence. Very naturally the Russian government deemed itself no longer bound by the arrangements which Germany disregarded, and it began to take measures to establish Russian influence in the western Balkans. Thus arose the rivalry between Austria and Russia for the control of Serbia which led to the World War.

Of this newer German policy Bismarck expressed his opinion in advance, and before his retirement from power, when, after stating his belief that "the European crisis most likely to arise is the eastern crisis," he proceeded to condemn any

attempt of Germany to interfere in the Balkans, saying:

> A great power that attempts to exert pressure on the policy of other countries, outside of its own sphere of interest, is taking risks. . . . It is following a policy of power, not one of interest; it is working for prestige.[1]

When the German-Austrian alliance was diverted from its original defensive purpose and became an alliance for the control of the Balkan peninsula, Italy's adhesion to this alliance ceased to correspond to Italian interests. Austria and Italy had no common interest in the Balkans except to resist the extension of Russian influence and of Slav power. The control of the peninsula by the Central Empires was, from the Italian point of view, as undesirable as its control by Russia. Any extension of Austria's possessions or influence on the eastern coast of the Adriatic was particularly objectionable. Accordingly, the new German policy in the Balkans tended inevitably to disruption of the Triple Alliance. After the Balkan wars, Austria and Italy were able to agree in opposing the annexation of Albania by the Balkan allies and in creating a nominally independent principality; but the suspicion of

[1] Speech of February 6, 1888.

each that the other was endeavouring to control the new state led to controversies which, in the early summer of 1914, seemed to imperil the maintenance of friendly relations between the two powers. This also was a contingency which Bismarck had envisaged. In the event of the collapse of the Triple Alliance, he wrote in 1892, "it would be for Germany a very serious situation if, in order to avoid isolation, it had no choice but to go with Austria in the East through thick and thin."[1]

One of the ablest of Bismarck's successors in the chancellorship, Prince von Bülow, stated, when he assumed that office, and has since maintained, that no statesman, not even a Bismarck, can determine the future development of a nation's policy. Germany, von Bülow says, can not be held to old methods and aims.[2] In general, this statement is indisputable. Nevertheless, as regards aims which were taking form in Bismarck's time or which he clearly foresaw, his favourable or unfavourable judgment is still of weight. As regards new methods, it is admissible to inquire whether they have proved as advantageous, in their direct and indirect results, as those which he employed.

[1] Bismarck, January 24, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii., p. 6.
[2] *Imperial Germany*, translation, p. 16.

V

At the outbreak of the World War, in August, 1914, the position of Germany was strikingly different from that in which Bismarck left it in 1890. The Triple Alliance which he had formed failed to hold: Italy declared itself neutral. On the other hand, the Franco-Russian alliance, formed after his dismissal, not only held, but received also, and at once, the support of Great Britain, on whose neutrality Berlin and Vienna had counted, and, before the end of August, the further support of Japan, which the Central Empires seem to have hoped to draw to their side by the prospect of gains to be secured in Asia at the cost of Russia.

Turkey and such of the Balkan states as were supposed to lean towards the Central Empires also declared themselves neutral. If, as there seems some reason to believe, the Central Empires had concluded treaties of alliance with Turkey and with Bulgaria, the temporary neutrality of these states was presumably a result of the entrance of Great Britain into the war. This was a contingency on which Constantinople and Sofia had reckoned as little as Vienna or Berlin, and it may well have produced divided counsels. Bul-

garia began to negotiate with both sides for territorial gains, awaiting the progress of military events. In October, 1914, the Central Empires secured the armed support of Turkey, partly, it is asserted, as the result of diplomatic mistakes made by the Entente powers, but ultimately and decisively through a *coup d'état* engineered by German officers in the Turkish military service. The entrance of Turkey into the war was not an unmixed advantage to the Central Empires: it was one of the factors that determined Italy's adhesion to the hostile coalition in May, 1915.

From the outbreak of the war, accordingly, Germany faced the peril which Bismarck was able so long to avert—"a coalition of superior power." In population and in economic resources, the enemies of the Central Empires were from the outset greatly superior; on the sea, their fighting power was many times greater; on land, in spite of inferior preparation, their power soon became substantially equal, even with Japan's army left out of the reckoning. The German emperor is reported to have said: "The more enemies, the more honour," but the saying is true of the soldier only. For the diplomatist, international enmities are not credits but debits, and an excess of such debits is diplomatic bankruptcy.

In striking contrast, again, with the position which Prussia held in every war it waged in Bismarck's time, is the fact that on the face of the record Austria and Germany were the aggressors. The documents published by seven of the belligerents[1] have been examined and analysed so often and so minutely that I shall only recapitulate the points which have most strongly influenced neutral opinion.

Until Austrian diplomacy emerged into publicity with the ultimatum to Serbia on July 23, the Dual Monarchy appeared to have strong claims on neutral sympathy. Continued hostile agitation in Serbia; alleged intrigues in Austria's Slav provinces; pledges of more neighbourly behaviour repeatedly broken; finally, the murder of the successor to the throne through a conspiracy asserted to have been framed in the Serbian capital

[1] Cited in the following pages as: British Blue Book; French Yellow Book; Russian Orange Book; Belgian Grey Book; Second Belgian Grey Book; Serbian Blue Book; German White Book; and Austro-Hungarian Red Book. All the documents contained in these publications (except some of those printed in the Second Belgian Grey Book) are to be found in *Collected Diplomatic Documents relating to the Outbreak of the European War* (London, 1915). This British collection contains also some documents not included in any of the earlier official publications. In citing passages from the French, Russian, German, and Austro-Hungarian collections the author has made his own translations from the French and German texts.

and to have been abetted by Serbian officials—these were indeed grievances. Neutral sympathy was sensibly lessened by the far-reaching demands formulated in the Austrian ultimatum, by the short period (forty-eight hours) given to Serbia for its reply, and even more by the unusual and peremptory tone of this undiplomatic communication. The Russian minister of foreign affairs was quite justified in saying that its form was "scarcely clever" (*peu habile*).[1] Even the German foreign secretary confessed that "the note left much to be desired as a diplomatic document."[2] The Belgian minister at Berlin reported to Brussels:

> Such a lack of moderation and discretion will inevitably attract the sympathies of the great mass of European public opinion to Serbia, in spite of the horror caused by the murders of Serajevo. Even at Berlin, to judge by the Liberal papers . . . the Austro-Hungarian demands are considered excessive.[3]

Neutral sympathy began to shift to the other side in consequence of Serbia's unexpectedly

[1] Russian Orange Book, no. 25.

[2] British Blue Book, no. 18.

[3] Second Belgian Grey Book, no. 4. The French ambassador in Vienna reported that the Austrian public was "surprised by the suddenness and the exaggeration of the Austrian demands"; French Yellow Book, no. 27.

conciliatory reply and Austria's refusal to recognize Serbia's concessions as a possible basis for negotiation or mediation. Instead of turning away wrath, Serbia's soft answer elicited a prompt declaration of war. Whatever neutral inclination toward the Austrian cause remained was stricken through with doubt by the revelations of M. Giolitti, former prime minister of Italy. He declared that in August, 1913, Italy was notified that Austria contemplated action against Serbia; that it deemed such action defensive; and that it hoped to receive German and Italian support. The Italian answer was that such action could not be regarded as defensive. "Our interpretation of the treaty," Giolitti added, "was accepted by our allies."[1] This revelation, not unnaturally, produced the impression that Austria's action in 1914 was determined less by Serbian intrigues and Serbian faithlessness than by a matured resolution to seize the first favourable opportunity to strengthen the position of the Dual Monarchy in the Balkan peninsula.

Germany had given its ally "an entirely free hand" in its action against Serbia.[2] Germany's efforts to maintain the peace of Europe, whether

[1] Speech in the Italian Parliament, December 5, 1914.
[2] German White Book, p. 6.

through its ordinary diplomatic service or through the direct appeals of the German emperor to other sovereigns, were limited to trying to "localize" the conflict, that is, to trying to keep Austria's hands free against Serbia.

This, at least, was the attitude of Austria and of Germany, July 23–28. On the 29th, in consequence of British efforts and at Germany's request,[1] the Austrian ambassador at St. Petersburg was directed to begin conversations with the Russian minister of foreign affairs. Within the two following days, Austria had agreed to accept mediation in its controversy with Serbia, provided Russia would arrest its military preparations; and Russia had agreed to do this if Austria would stay its military action against Serbia.[2] At this juncture, however, on July 31, Germany demanded that Russia should demobilize, and, upon Russia's refusal, declared war, August 1. On July 31, Germany inquired what attitude France would assume in a war between Germany and Russia and, receiving no satisfactory assurances on

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[2] Austro-Hungarian Red Book, introduction to the official English translation, p. vii., and nos. 47, 51, 53, 55; Russian Orange Book, nos. 53, 60, 67; French Yellow Book, nos. 104, 114, 120, 121; British Blue Book, nos. 97, 103, 110, 120, 131, 132, 133, 135, 161.

this point, declared war against France, August 3. On August 2, Germany invaded Luxemburg, and on the evening of the same day it demanded free passage through Belgium, under express threat of war and scarcely veiled threat of annexation.[1] On Belgium's refusal, German troops crossed the Belgian frontier, August 4.

If any one of the series of events that precipitated the war can be regarded as decisive, it was the action of Germany in declaring war because Russia was mobilizing. In international theory and practice, however, mobilization is not regarded as a sufficient cause for war. The proper answer to mobilization is mobilization.[2]

On the other hand, on the face of the record, Serbia, Russia, France, and Belgium were, each and all of them, countries attacked; and none of them, with the possible exception of Serbia, had

[1] "If Belgium consents, in the war about to commence, to take up an attitude of friendly neutrality toward Germany, the German government on its part undertakes, on the declaration of peace, to guarantee the kingdom and its possessions in their whole extent. . . . If Belgium behaves in a hostile manner . . . Germany will take no engagements towards Belgium but will leave the later settlement of the relations of the two states towards one another to the decision of arms." German White Book, no. 37; Belgian Grey Book, no. 20.

[2] For Bismarck's theory and practice see below, pp. 77–78. For the attitude of Austrian and German diplomacy on this point prior to August 1, see below, pp. 93–95, 101–103.

committed any overt act which gave Austria or Germany formal cause for war.

With Great Britain, it is true, Germany sought to maintain peace, and it was Great Britain that attacked Germany. Germany, however, gave Great Britain an unimpeachable ground for declaring war by violating treaty obligations[1] which secured long-recognized and important British interests.[2] Great Britain attacked Germany by the same right by which Prussia and Austria attacked Denmark in 1864. That Great Britain had other grounds for declaring war is not disputed. They are indicated in the correspondence published by the British government,[3] and they were frankly stated—and put first—by Sir Edward Grey in his speech in the House of Commons, August 3.[4] If among its various grounds for declaring war, the British government finally selected that which was formally the best and which would appeal most strongly to public sentiment in Great Britain and in other countries, it is not chargeable with insincerity or with hypocrisy.

[1] Treaties of 1831 and 1839, neutralizing Belgium and placing its neutrality under the guaranty of the signatory powers. Treaty of 1867, neutralizing Luxemburg with similar guaranty.

[2] See above, p. 17, and below, pp. 108, 110–112.

[3] British Blue Book, especially nos. 89, 110, 111.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 89–96.

Any other course would have been unintelligent. As far as the appeal to public sentiment is concerned, Austria and Germany acted in the same way; the former in the stress it laid upon the crime of Serajevo, the latter in charging the Russian emperor with "perfidy" because his armies were mobilizing while the German emperor was conducting direct personal negotiations with him.[1]

On the face of the record again, the powers of the Triple Entente, and pre-eminently Great Britain, exhibited an apparently sincere desire to maintain the peace of Europe. In the brief time available, between Austria's ultimatum to Serbia, July 23, and Germany's ultimatum to Russia, July 31, these powers, and also Italy, seem to have made every possible effort to avert war.

The Austrian and German governments assert, indeed, that these efforts were insincere. They claim that Russia was the prime aggressor. They maintained from the outset that Russia had no just cause to intervene, even through its diplomacy, to protect Serbia. If the division of spheres of influence in the Balkan peninsula, as recognized

[1] This was the *casus belli* emphasized in the German press in the early days of August.

at the close of the nineteenth century, had persisted, this assertion would be plausible. In fact, however, as we have seen, this arrangement had long been abandoned, and primarily because of German encroachments upon the Russian sphere of influence.[1] By attacking Serbia, Austria menaced the existing balance of power in the Balkans; and it was on this ground, not on the ground of a duty to protect a Slav state, that Russia intervened.[2] Austria indeed declared that it had no intention of disturbing the balance of power,[3] and it offered to promise not to annex Serbian territory; but it was unable to satisfy Russia that Serbian independence was not threatened.[4] It was precisely on this last point that negotiations were in progress when Germany declared war.

Germany further contends that in reality the British government is responsible for the war,

[1] See above, pp. 22, 37. For Austrian recognition of its abandonment, at least since the Balkan Wars, see British Blue Book, nos. 91, 118.

[2] British Blue Book, no. 17; Russian Orange Book, no. 77. See also telegram of the Russian emperor to the British king, August 1, 1914, in *Collected Diplomatic Documents*, p. 537.

[3] Austro-Hungarian Red Book, introduction to official English translation, p. vi., and nos. 26, 32; German White Book, p. 8, and nos. 5, 10.

[4] Russian Orange Book, nos. 41, 60, 67; Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 47.

because Russia would not have mobilized without assurance of French support, and France would not have pledged support to Russia without assurance of British support.[1] Even if the German assertions on this point were accepted as true, the burden of aggression would not thereby be shifted from the Central Empires to the Triple Entente, unless it were also conceded that Russian mobilization was an act of war. If the Russian mobilization be regarded, as mobilization is usually regarded, as a precautionary measure, the German plea amounts only to this: that Russia was assured of French support against German aggression, and that France gave this assurance because it in its turn was assured of British support in a similar contingency. But what evidence is produced to show that France was assured of British support before Russia mobilized? The only direct evidence adduced is an intercepted letter of a young Belgian diplomatist, who in consequence of the temporary absence of his chief was chargé d'affaires at St. Petersburg. This letter is dated July 30, and it contains the statement: "Today there is a firm

[1] Bethmann-Hollweg, speech in the German Parliament, December 2, 1914; "Despite all pacific assurances, London caused it to be understood in St. Petersburg that England was on the side of France and consequently also of Russia."

conviction in St. Petersburg, indeed the assurance has been given, that England will support France."[1] The writer gives no indication of the source from which he derives this information. On the face of his letter, he is simply reporting the diplomatic gossip of the Russian capital. This apparently reflected the impression produced in every European capital, including Berlin, by the conversation of July 29, between the British foreign secretary and the German ambassador in London, in which Germany was warned that it must not count absolutely on British neutrality.[2]

Documentary evidence against the correctness of the German theory is to be found in the recorded negotiations between Russia and France on the one side and Great Britain on the other. In an interview between the Russian foreign minister and the French and British ambassadors at St. Petersburg on July 24, the Russian foreign minister "thought that Russian mobilization would at any rate have to be carried out," because of the provocative character of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia. The French ambassador indicated "that France would fulfil all the obligations entailed by her alliance with Russia, if necessity

[1] German White Book, no. 28.
[2] British Blue Book, no. 89.

arose." These and other utterances gave the British ambassador the impression that "even if we decline to join them, France and Russia are determined to make a strong stand." Both the Russian minister and the French ambassador urged upon the British ambassador the importance of a British declaration of solidarity with France and Russia. The British ambassador told them that he

> saw no reason to expect any declaration of solidarity from his Majesty's government that would entail an unconditional engagement on their part to support Russia and France by force of arms. Direct British interests in Serbia were nil, and a war on behalf of that country would never be sanctioned by British public opinion.[1]

On the following day the British ambassador heard from the British foreign secretary that his statement was entirely approved, and on July 27 he announced this to the Russian foreign minister.[2] Further appeals for a declaration of British solidarity with France and Russia were equally unsuccessful.[3] So far from being assured of British support was France on July 30, that on this and the following day the French government was

[1] British Blue Book, no. 6. [2] *Ibid.*, nos. 24, 44.
[3] *Ibid.*, nos. 47 (July 27) and 59 (July 29).

still asking for definite pledges and the British government was still refusing to commit itself. On July 31 the president of the French Republic addressed such an appeal to King George, and on August 1 the king could promise nothing more than "a free and frank discussion of points of common interest."[1] Only on August 2 was the French government assured that, subject to the approval of the British Parliament, France would receive British naval support against any hostile operation that might be undertaken by the German fleet.[2]

In Russia, however, as we have seen, mobilization was thought to be inevitable on July 24. According to the German documents, it began on July 25 and orders for general mobilization were issued on the 31st.[3]

The German official theory is (or was) that an assurance of British support to France begot an assurance of French support to Russia, which in turn begot Russian aggression. The facts, in

[1] *Ibid.*, nos. 99, 105, 116, 119; French Yellow Book, no. 110. See also Grey's despatch to Goschen, July 31; British Blue Book, no. 111. The personal correspondence between President Poincaré and King George was published in London, February 19, 1915, and is to be found in *Collected Diplomatic Documents*, pp. 542–544.

[2] British Blue Book, no. 89; French Yellow Book, no. 137.

[3] German White Book, pp. 8, 17–18, nos. 7, 23a, 24, 25.

their historical order, are these: on July 24 France assured Russia of support against a German attack; on July 31 Russia ordered a general mobilization; on August 2 Great Britain gave its first pledge to France—and this, like the earlier French pledge to Russia, was a promise of support against German aggression.

In the Russian and French appeals for an assurance of eventual British support, it was repeatedly urged that such a declaration would make for peace. Since the outbreak of the war the belief has been expressed by some English writers that Great Britain might thus have prevented the catastrophe. Some of the reasons why the British government was unwilling to take this attitude were indicated during the negotiations and were more fully stated at the outbreak of hostilities.[1] This question lies outside the scope of the present inquiry. It assumes that the Teutonic Empires were determined to carry through their Balkan policies at the risk of a European war—which is the question here under investigation—and that they might have been deterred from aggression if they had been, not warned only,

[1] British Blue Book, introductory narrative, nos. 6, 17, 24, 44, 47, 59, and pp. 89–91. Other and even more cogent reasons for the attitude of the British government were subsequently revealed; see below, pp. 143–145; also pp. 148–149, 154–157.

as they were, not to count on British neutrality,[1] but also distinctly threatened with British as well as with Russian and French opposition.

Failing to throw the burden of aggression upon the Entente powers, the Central Empires are driven back upon their last line of defence—that the war was inevitable, that it would have been forced upon them later when their enemies were better prepared, and that they were justified in starting a "preventive" or "anticipatory war."[2] This plea admits aggression and seeks to excuse it. The excuse rests upon allegations of fact, or rather of intention, and upon a political theory. The theory of "preventive war" will be considered later. It will be shown to be essentially a military theory, which Bismarck rejected and opposed.[3] For the present it is sufficient to note that the hostile intentions which alone would justify its application have not been proved or even shown to be probable. Acceptance of the German contention rests not on reason but on faith.

In the German invasion of Luxemburg and of Belgium aggression was coupled with breach of treaty. The violation of faith was peculiarly flagrant, because Prussia was one of the powers

[1] See below, p. 112.
[2] See below, p. 228.
[3] See below, pp. 71–76.

that had undertaken to guarantee the neutrality of these states. The invasion was like an attack by a powerful guardian upon helpless wards.

It has indeed been asserted by a few writers that the German Empire did not succeed to obligations assumed before its establishment by Prussia or by other single German states, and was therefore not bound by the action of Prussia in guaranteeing Belgian neutralization in 1831 and 1839 and the neutralization of Luxemburg in 1867. This position has no basis in international theory or practice. The German imperial government has in fact recognized and even invoked such earlier state treaties.[1]

It has been asserted also that the treaties of 1831 and 1839, if still binding upon Prussia in 1870, were put out of force by two identical treaties concluded in 1870 between Great Britain on the one side and France and Prussia on the other. In these treaties the British government undertook, in case either France or the North German

[1] The United States, for example, has no expatriation treaty with the German Empire, but under its treaties with Bavaria and other South German states every South German naturalized in the United States was, until recently, regarded by the German imperial government as divested of his German nationality. And during the present war the German imperial government has invoked provisions of treaties concluded between Prussia and the United States in 1799 and in 1828.

Federation should violate the neutrality of Belgium, to co-operate with the other non-offending power for the defence of that neutrality. These treaties, however, were avowedly concluded not to supersede but to reinforce the earlier treaties.[1] They were to operate only during the war then raging and for twelve months after the conclusion of peace. In each of them it was stipulated:

> At the expiration of this period the independence and the neutrality of Belgium shall continue, as regards the high contracting powers, to rest as previously on the first article of the quintuple treaty of April 19, 1839.

Except as indicating the spirit in which these arrangements were made, the clause cited is pure surplusage. Without the concurrence of Austria and Russia, the other signatory powers could neither abrogate nor re-establish the treaty of 1839, nor could the obligations of the treaties of 1831 and of 1839 be destroyed without the concurrence of Belgium.[2]

The German imperial government has not employed either of the preceding arguments.

[1] Gladstone, speech in the House of Commons, August 10, 1870: "The treaty of 1839 loses nothing of its force even during the existence of this present treaty."

[2] See the declaration of the powers at the London Conference of 1871, above, p. 9, note.

It was estopped from using them by its own declarations. In its treaty with Great Britain in 1870, Prussia, as we have seen, recognized the continued validity of the treaty of 1839. Moreover, the intention of the German Empire to respect the neutrality of Belgium was asserted by the German imperial chancellor (von Bethmann-Hollweg) in 1911 and by the imperial foreign secretary (von Jagow) in 1913; and on July 31, 1914, four days before the German invasion of Belgium, the German minister in Brussels assured the Belgian foreign secretary that the sentiments expressed by his government in 1911 and in 1913 had not changed.[1] On August 4, Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg told the Reichstag and the world that the protests of the governments of Luxemburg and of Belgium were rightful, and that the invasion of these states was a wrong.

To excuse the German invasion of Luxemburg and of Belgium two pleas were officially put forward: first, that it was necessary[2]; second, that Germany's enemies intended to violate the neutrality of these states and to use their territory

[1] Belgian Grey Book, no. 12.

[2] Second Belgian Grey Book, nos. 25, 51, 52; British Blue Book, no. 160; von Bethmann-Hollweg, speech in the Reichstag, August 4, 1914.

as a base of operations against the German forces.[1]

To justify the invasion of Belgium a third plea was subsequently added: that Belgium had agreed that its territory should be so used against Germany and was therefore no longer a neutral state but an ally of Germany's enemies. On August 4, indeed, the German foreign secretary assured the Belgian minister at Berlin that "Germany has nothing with which to reproach Belgium, whose attitude has always been correct."[2] On December 2, 1914, however, Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg said in the Reichstag:

> When on August 4 I spoke of the wrong we were committing in invading Belgium . . . there were already many indications of guilt on the part of the Belgian government. . . . Now that it is shown by documents found in Brussels . . . in what manner and to what extent Belgium had abandoned its neutrality as regards England, it is clear to all the world . . . that when our troops entered Belgian territory they were on the soil of

[1] Telegram from the German foreign secretary to the Luxemburg government, August 2, in Renault, *Les premières violations du droit des gens par Allemagne* (Paris, 1917), p. 13. German ultimatum to the Belgian government, August 2; Belgian Grey Book, no. 20. Telegram from Emperor William II to President Wilson, August 10; Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany* (1917), p. 202.

[2] Second Belgian Grey Book, no. 51.

a state which had itself long before worm-holed its own neutrality.

Let us first consider this last plea. If the German allegations on this point could be proved, the strongest prejudice which Germany's conduct of the war has aroused in neutral countries would tend to disappear. Whether the treaties of 1831 and 1839 were or were not in force and binding upon Germany, whether Belgium was or was not a neutralized country, it was apparently a neutral country, and it was ravaged with fire and steel because the German armies could thus reach France most quickly. In America, at least, this was the immediate reaction of general opinion. Had it been possible to show that Belgium had planned to open its frontiers to Germany's enemies for an invasion of German territory, the feeling aroused by the German invasion of Belgium would have been shortlived.

What has Germany been able to prove? So far as documentary evidence is concerned, it has been able to show only that between 1906 and 1912 British military attachés had discussed with Belgian military authorities plans of joint action to meet a German invasion of Belgium. The records of these discussions show that the Belgian military representatives refused to consider any

landing of British troops until German troops should have crossed the Belgian frontier.[1] On their face, such discussions were absolutely legitimate. Belgium was bound by treaty to defend its own neutrality and Great Britain was entitled, if not bound, to aid Belgium in case of need. If these discussions had led to a formal agreement between the Belgian and British governments for the defence of Belgian neutrality, as the Germans have pretended, such an agreement would not have constituted a breach of that neutrality. In fact, however, there was no "convention"; there were only "conversations." If, as is insisted, no consultations were held with German military attachés to provide for the defence of Belgian neutrality against a French or British invasion, what does that prove? Only that the Belgians knew well or guessed rightly on which side their neutrality was menaced. In order to protect themselves, however, against even a

[1] Reports of these discussions, found by the Germans in Brussels, were published in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 13, 1914, and in facsimile, November 25, 1914. These documents were published with English translations in a pamphlet entitled: *The Case against Belgium* (n.d.) with an introduction by Dr. Bernhard Dernburg. They are to be found also in *Collected Diplomatic Documents*, pp. 350–367. Belgian and British explanations are given in the Second Belgian Grey Book, part 2, sec. 10, nos. 98–103.

shadow of suspicion, the Belgians, we are assured, informed the German legation in Brussels that these military conversations were in progress.[1]

That British troops or officers were permitted to enter Belgium before the German inroad has not, so far as the writer can ascertain, been asserted by any Germans. That French officers and troops were in Belgium before the Germans came in has been asserted, not indeed by the German government, but by the German press. Their presence, if proven, would not show that Belgian territory was to be used for an attack upon Germany; but it has not been proven, and it has been categorically denied by the Belgian and French governments.[2] For the rest, it is a matter of record that on August 3, the day following the German ultimatum to Belgium, the Belgian minister informed the French minister at Brussels that Belgium was not yet disposed to appeal to the guarantor powers for armed assistance. Such an appeal was made only on the

[1] Authorized statement, transmitted by the Belgian minister at Washington, in E. C. Stowell, *Diplomacy of the War of 1914*, pp. 407–408. Interview with King Albert, published in the New York *World*, March 22, 1915; see Stowell, p. 407.

[2] Belgian Grey Book, Appendix, no. 6, inclosure 3. See also Emile Waxweiler, *La Belgique neutrale et loyale*, pp. 143–163.

following day, when the threatened German invasion had begun.[1]

On the face of the record, the Belgian government seems to have been as meticulous in observing the forms — one is tempted to say the etiquette—as it was scrupulous in preserving the substance of neutrality. But even if the German assertions to the contrary could be substantiated, Germany would in no wise be freed from the charge of aggression. Assuming that Belgium was, as they claim, a "virtual ally" of Great Britain or of France, it would still be necessary to inquire whether the alliance was offensive or purely defensive. The German plea of justification assumes that if a country with which one has no quarrel be in virtual alliance with a state which one means to attack, or with a state from which an attack is apprehended, such a country may legitimately be invaded—and this not only without inquiring whether the country in question proposes to espouse the hostile cause, but even in face of its assurance that it intends to remain neutral.

The German assertion, made in the ultimatum to Belgium, that France was planning to send troops through Belgium into Germany, and the

[1] Belgian Grey Book, nos. 24, 38, 40.

more recent assertion that Great Britain intended to send troops into Belgium without waiting until German troops crossed the Belgian frontier, can have no influence upon neutral opinion. Neither in law nor in morals, public or private, is a wrong excused by alleging, or even by proving, that a similar wrong was contemplated by an adversary. Moreover, neither of these assertions has been proved. Of such an intention on the part of the French government no satisfactory evidence has been submitted. Against the existence of any such intention there is both formal and material evidence. Not only did the French government promise to respect the neutrality of Belgium,[1] but it seems to be an established fact that there was no concentration of French troops on the Belgian frontier.[2] Of alleged aggressive intentions on the part of Great Britain, the only evidence adduced is an opinion expressed in 1912 by Lieutenant-Colonel Bridges, the British military attaché at Brussels, that if the Belgians were not in a position to defend their neutrality, the

[1] Belgian Grey Book, nos. 9, 13, 15; British Blue Book, no 125; French Yellow Book, no. 122.

[2] Statement of the French War Ministry, March 24, 1915. All accounts of the early phases of the war, including those written by German military experts, support this statement. See citations from Lt. Gen. von Freytag-Loringhoven, *New York Times*, Aug. 12, 1917.

British government would disembark troops, even if not asked for assistance.[1] Here again there was no question of an attack upon Germany: it was a question of protecting Belgium against a prospective German attack. This, however, was precisely the plea—or one of the pleas—which Germany advanced to justify its invasion of Belgium. It asserted a belief that the French were about to invade that country. This, of course, is the reason why the Germans have attached so much importance to Colonel Bridges's statement. England, they say, intended to do exactly what it reproaches Germany for doing. Not only, however, is there an important difference between an intention and an act, but there is also an important difference between the opinion of a military attaché and a governmental decision. It is a matter of common knowledge that military attachés are never empowered to commit their governments to any line of action, and that their opinions, if not purely personal, reflect at most the desires of their military chiefs, not the intentions

[1] Conversations cited above, p. 61, note 1. The Belgian report published by the German authorities gives new documentary proof of the correctness of the Belgian attitude; for, in reply to the suggestion of the British military attaché, the Belgian General Jungbluth at once said: "But you could not disembark in our country without our consent."

of the political heads of their governments. In this case, as a matter of fact, the opinion expressed by the British military attaché was formally repudiated by the British Foreign Office.[1]

Intelligent Germans may well regret, as some have already publicly regretted, that defence or palliation of the invasion of Belgium should have been based on any other ground than that taken by the German Foreign Office and the German chancellor in the first days of the war. Germany should have rested its case on the plea of necessity. A frank admission of wrong-doing, coupled with the assertion that no other course of action was possible, has the ring of sincerity and is not without a certain dignity. Neither of these impressions, nor any other impression favourable to Germany, is made by the attempt to calumniate ravaged Belgium.

The plea of necessity has been widely discussed. For my present purpose it is unnecessary to consider either the general question, whether and to what extent necessity can justify or excuse acts wrongful in themselves,[2] or the special question of

[1] Despatch of Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Villiers, British minister at Brussels, April 7, 1913; Second Belgian Grey Book, no. 100; *Collected Diplomatic Documents*, p. 536.

[2] The well-known German jurist, Dr. Joseph Kohler, professor in the Berlin Law Faculty, asserts that "in action dictated by necessity there is no violation of law." Article in *Der Tag*, March 30, 1915.

the nature and degree of the necessity by which the German government claimed to be constrained.[1] For the present it is enough to say that, if it be necessary for an individual or a nation to break the law and to repudiate obligations voluntarily assumed, it is also necessary for the offender to accept the consequences. The immediate—in many instances the only—sanction of international law is to be found in the reaction of general sentiment and opinion; and it is difficult to see why the nation that finds it necessary to break the laws of the world and to "scrap" its own treaties should feel surprise or manifest indignation when it encounters general reprobation.

On the face of the record, responsibility for the World War rests on the shoulders of the Central Empires. In asserting that they were really attacked or threatened with attack, Austria and Germany are today in the position in which Bismarck's adversaries habitually found themselves; they can not prove their assertions. If in the future, on the basis of evidence which we do not possess, the historian shall be able to show that in 1914 the Triple Entente brought about a general war in order to crush Germany and dismember Austria, he will still be forced to say

[1] See below, pp. 104–105, 165–166.

that the conspiring governments played the diplomatic game according to Bismarckian traditions; and if he fails to attribute to Grey or to Sazonoff as high a degree of adroitness as Bismarck displayed, it will be because the ineptitude of their adversaries made their task easier than his.

VI

The inferiority of Austrian and German diplomacy in 1914 to that of Bismarck in the German Unity Wars might plausibly be explained by the personal difference between a statesman of genius and the average diplomatist. This, however, hardly accounts for the inferiority of Austro-German diplomacy to that of the Triple Entente. It is the chief purpose of this paper to suggest an explanation.

In the histories, biographies, and memoirs of the Bismarckian period, we read of conflicts between the Prussian premier and German chancellor on the one hand, and the military leaders, notably the chief of the General Staff, on the other. These are usually regarded as collisions of strong personalities, ascribable largely to competing personal ambitions. They mean more than this. They represent the natural and

apparently necessary antithesis of the political and the military mind; and they typify the perpetual and universal struggle between diplomacy and military strategy.

The statesman and the soldier are inclined to take different views of the function of military power. To the statesman it is an instrument of statecraft. To the soldier it is the basis of the state. Thus Moltke said:

> The army takes the first place among the institutions of every country, for it alone makes possible the existence of all the other institutions. All political and civil liberty, all the creations of civilization, the finances, the state itself, stand and fall with the army.[1]

Intimately connected with this view is the military conception of prestige. We have seen what Bismarck thought of policies of power and of prestige. To the soldier, on the other hand, the state is power; and the fear which it inspires in other states, which is one form of prestige, is essential to its welfare, if not to its existence. Prestige, however, which is at best only the image or reflection of the substantial, and may be mere semblance or illusion, is protean in its aspects. It is often the reflection of success.

[1] Speech in the Reichstag, January 11, 1887.

It is often the illusion of dignity or of honour. To General Bernhardi (who in this respect, as in others, typifies the military mind) honour and dignity, as well as success in war and the fear which such success inspires, are all indistinguishably blended in the notion of prestige. He writes:

> War seems imperative, when, although the material basis of power is not threatened, the moral influence of the state . . . seems to be prejudiced. Apparently trifling causes may under certain circumstances constitute a fully justifiable *casus belli*, if the honour of the state, and consequently its moral prestige, are endangered. . . . An antagonist must never be allowed to believe that there is any lack of determination to assert this prestige, even if the sword must be drawn to do so.[1]

Very weighty and very thorny questions are begged in the vague phrase, "under certain circumstances." The sentiments which long maintained the duel in England and in America, and still maintain it in continental Europe, are far stronger in the military class than among civilians. Today, as in the sixteenth century, the soldier is "jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel." To slight discourtesies, even to lack of deference, the European officer, and particularly the German officer, exhibits an extreme sensitive-

[1] Bernhardi, *Germany and the Next War*, translation, pp. 49–50.

ness. This reappears, pushed to the point of caricature, in the German corps student. Closely related to this sensitiveness is the disastrous notion that "trifling causes" may so endanger the prestige of the state as to justify war. Bismarck was a Junker; he had swung the *Schläger* at Göttingen; he was a Prussian military officer; but Bismarck, the statesman, wrote:

> International conflicts, which can be settled only by wars between peoples, I have never regarded from the point of view of the student duel and its code of honour.[1]

Another and very important difference between the military and the political point of view reveals itself when there is question of anticipating a war because it is deemed inevitable and the moment seems favourable. On this point Bismarck and Moltke were, on at least two occasions, of different opinions. In 1867, during the dispute over Luxemburg, Moltke said to a fellow member of the North German Parliament, Count Bethusy-Huc:

> I cannot but wish that the occasion given for a war with France were taken advantage of. Unhappily I regard this war as absolutely unavoidable

[1] Memoirs, vol. ii., p. 268; translation, vol. ii., p. 294.

within the next five years, and within this period the now indisputable superiority of our organization and weapons will be equalled by France. . . . The sooner, therefore, we come to blows the better.

Bethusy laid Moltke's views before Bismarck. The latter "recognized the justice of Moltke's remarks," but declared that he could not assume responsibility for the course of action proposed.

> The personal conviction [Bismarck said] of a ruler or statesman, however well founded, that war would eventually break out, could not justify its promotion. Unforeseen events might alter the situation and avert what seemed inevitable.[1]

In 1875, again, when the German military party, disquieted by the rapid re-establishment of French power, wished to crush France before it became stronger, Bismarck opposed the plan. Early in

[1] *Gesammelte Schriften und Denkwürdigkeiten des Grafen Helmuth von Moltke*, vol. v., pp. 297, 298; *Essays, Speeches, and Memoirs of Count Helmuth von Moltke* (abridged translation, 1883), vol. ii., pp. 204, 205. See Bismarck's speech of January 11, 1887; also his Memoirs, vol. ii., pp. 92, 93; translation, vol. ii., p. 103. There is other contemporary evidence besides Bethusy's that in 1867 Bismarck was not convinced that war with France was either inevitable or desirable. In 1870 his view had changed. He had decided that war with France was necessary for the completion of German unity and was therefore to be promoted. See article, January 16, 1893, in Hofmann, vol. ii., pp. 196, 197.

the following year he asked the Reichstag what it would have thought of a proposal, on his part, to start a war without any special reason, simply because it seemed possible that within a few years Germany might be attacked and, to prevent this, it was desirable "to fall quickly on our neighbours and hew them to pieces before they had fully recovered their strength." Would not the deputies have wished that he be subjected to medical examination, in order to determine how, after long experience in politics, he could have perpetrated this stupendous stupidity (*diese kolossale Dummheit*)? Such a preventive war, he said, would have been "suicide in apprehension of death."[1] And of this episode he wrote, twenty years later:

> Such a war, in my opinion, would not have led to permanently tenable conditions in Europe, but might well have given rise to a common feeling of distrust on the part of Russia, Austria, and England, and eventually to concerted action on their part against the new and not yet consolidated Empire, which, in waging such a war, would have started on the road on which the first and second French Empires, in a continuous policy of war and prestige, went to meet destruction. Europe would have seen in our action an abuse of the power we had

[1] Speech of February 9, 1876. See also speech of January 11, 1887.

acquired, and everyone's hand . . . would have been persistently raised against Germany or would have been on the sword hilt.[1]

According to Bismarck, the military plan of seizing the first favourable opportunity of crushing France was not abandoned in 1875. "Later also," he says, "this plan was advocated"[2]; but he remained convinced that it was impossible to say

[1] Memoirs, vol. ii., pp. 175, 176; translation, vol. ii., p. 192. See also article, November 4, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii. pp. 160, 161.

It was assumed at the time in France and in England, and it is still commonly asserted, that Bismarck himself supported the plan of attacking France in 1875. Of this I find no proof; and such an attitude on Bismarck's part seems improbable, because it would have been inconsistent with his entire policy from 1871 to the close of his administration. By those who assert Bismarck's desire to force a war in 1875, no value is attached to his own denials; wrongly, I think; for while Bismarck sometimes was guilty of suppressing the truth and of suggesting falsehood, he had a possibly inconsistent but very marked unwillingness to employ the lie direct. Evidence that Bismarck was not in sympathy with the plan of the military party is afforded in the letter of Emperor William I to Bismarck, August 6, 1875, and in Bismarck's reply, August 13, *Anhang zu den Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, nos. 270, 271, pp. 256–261; also in the diary of Prince Hohenlohe, who at the time was the German ambassador in Paris; *Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe*, vol. ii., pp. 140, 155–156, 167, 171–172; translation, vol. ii., pp. 129, 145–146, 155, 160.

[2] One of these later occasions was in 1887, when General Boulanger was at the height of his popularity and a war party was active in France. During this year there were two frontier incidents, the Schnäbele and Kaufmann affairs, which might easily have led to war. Bismarck settled both incidents by giving prompt satisfaction to France.

that any war was inevitable. No one, he said, "can look into the cards held by Providence."[1]

Bernhardi reasserts the military point of view:

> When there are indications of an offensive alliance of stronger enemies who only await the favourable moment to strike, the moral duty of the state towards its citizens is to begin the struggle while the prospects of success and the political circumstances are still tolerably favourable.[2]

Bismarck did not live to see the formation of the Triple Entente, to which Bernhardi obviously alludes; but, long before Russia and France had joined hands, he had spoken of the possibility of a future war with these powers and of the attitude which Germany should assume. In 1888, addressing the German Parliament, he said:

> If I were to come before you and say: We are seriously menaced by France and by Russia; it is to be foreseen that we shall be attacked; that is my conviction as a diplomatist; according to military information, it is better for our defence to employ the anticipatory thrust of the attack and open hostilities at once; accordingly, I ask the Imperial Diet for a credit of a milliard of marks in order to start the war today against both our neighbours—well, gentlemen, I do not know whether you have

[1] Memoirs, vol. ii., p. 93; translation, vol. ii., p. 103.
[2] *Germany and the Next War*, translation, p. 53.

> sufficient confidence in me to vote such a grant. I hope not. . . . We must not let the advantage [of the defensive position] escape us, even if at the moment we are . . . superior to our future enemies. . . . Even if we are attacked at an unfavourable moment, we shall be strong enough for our defence. And we shall keep the chance of peace, leaving it to Divine Providence to determine whether in the meantime the necessity of war may not disappear.[1]

It is not when war seems probable in the near future, but when it is in sight, that military considerations come into sharpest conflict with the aims of the diplomatist. On more than one occasion, during the German Unity Wars, the military demand for prompt action threatened to deprive Bismarck of the time he needed for the attainment of his diplomatic ends. In 1864, when it seemed to him of the utmost importance that Prussia should take no steps without Austria, it was apparently a military point of honour that menaced his policy. He tells the story in his memoirs:

> Our further co-operation with Austria was imperilled, in the first place, by energetic pressure of military influences on the king, to persuade him to cross the Jutland frontier without Austria. My

[1] Speech of February 6, 1888.

> old friend Field Marshal Wrangel telegraphed to the king, and not in cipher, the grossest insults against me. In one of these telegrams there was a passage, obviously referring to me, about diplomatists who belonged on the gallows.[1]

More important and more typical was a difference of opinion between Bismarck and Moltke in 1866. In the four months preceding the war against Austria, Bismarck conducted what, for our present purposes, is perhaps the most instructive of all his *ante bellum* campaigns. Precisely because he was forcing war upon Austria, he was particularly anxious to avoid the appearance of aggression. Accordingly, at every stage in the dispute, he kept Prussia one move behind Austria in the matter of open military preparations. In the middle of March, Austria concentrated troops in Bohemia. In reply, Prussia placed its active army in a state of readiness for war. In the course of April, several of the smaller German states began to make military preparations. On April 8, a treaty of alliance was concluded between Prussia and Italy, and Italy began to mobilize. Austria then mobilized in the south against Italy, and, in the last days of April, it ordered a general mobilization. During this month, Austria twice

[1] Memoirs, vol. i., p. 343; translation, vol. i., p. 379.

offered to stay its military preparations if Prussia would do the same; but it demanded free hand against Italy, and Prussia refused to leave its ally in the lurch. During the first half of May, Prussia mobilized its reserves and concentrated troops on the Saxon frontier and in Silesia. Then it waited. At this point, Moltke lost patience. He wished an immediate commencement of military operations, because, with every day's delay, the imperfectly equipped and only partially concentrated hostile forces were growing stronger.[1] King William, however, supported Bismarck, and the Prussian troops were held in leash for nearly a month after mobilization. Then at last Bismarck got what he was waiting for—overt aggression on the part of Austria.[2]

These were not the only differences between Bismarck and the General Staff. Other conflicts

[1] Sybel, *Begründung des deutschen Reichs*, vol. iv., p. 421; translation, vol. iv., p. 471.

[2] As regards the manner in which a country should meet a menacing concentration of troops on its frontier, Bismarck expressed himself twenty years later in the same sense in which he acted in 1866. Concentration of troops, he said, was a matter concerning which not even explanations were to be demanded. "If one begins to ask for explanations, the reply may be somewhat ambiguous, and then the triplication will be quite free from ambiguity." Concentration of troops should be met by taking quietly the necessary military precautions. Speech of February 6, 1888.

are recorded, concerning the conduct of military operations and concerning terms of peace. When war has broken out, the leaders of the army resent, and not without reason, the intrusion of political considerations in the discussion of what are primarily military questions. Bismarck, however, insisted that

> the determination and limitation of the objects which are to be attained by war . . . are and remain, during the war as before its outbreak, political problems; and the way in which these are solved cannot be without influence upon the conduct of the war.[1]

As regards terms of peace, Bismarck came once at least into sharp conflict with the leaders of the Prussian army. In 1866, after the defeat of Austria, they wished to make a triumphal entry into Vienna and to demand cession of Austrian territory as well as a large war indemnity. Believing that the common interests of Austria and Germany would eventually draw them together again, and desiring to avoid such resentment as needlessly humiliating terms of peace would leave rankling in Austrian minds, Bismarck successfully opposed these demands. In 1871, again,

[1] Memoirs, vol. ii., p. 96; translation, vol. ii., p. 106.

there was a difference of opinion regarding the annexation of Metz. Protesting, in 1887, against the notion that Germany could desire more French territory, Bismarck said:

> Even in 1871, I must honestly say, I was not much inclined to take Metz. At that time I was for the language frontier. However, I consulted the military authorities before reaching a final decision . . . and I received the answer . . . Metz is worth 100,000 men.[1]

This, so far as I know, is the only instance in which Bismarck allowed his political judgment to be overruled by military considerations.

In all these conflicts, the military opponents of Bismarck showed failure to appreciate the imponderables. This, I think, is a typical military defect. The business of the diplomatist is to persuade; that of the soldier is to crush. The diplomatist has to get under the skin of his adversary, not with lead or steel, but with imagination. And when it comes to divining the sentiments and prejudices of men of alien blood and speech, it is necessary to be well versed in their national history. For these and other studies essential to the diplomatist, the military officer has no sufficient leisure. With the increasing

[1] Speech of January 11, 1887.

complexity of the instruments and methods of warfare, his professional training becomes more and more exacting of toil and of time.

When the question is of anticipating or averting a probable war, or of hastening or delaying an imminent war, the strategist, because he does not give due consideration to the imponderables, is unable justly to appreciate the political advantages of the defensive attitude. He is apt, rather, to ignore them entirely, because of his appreciation of the advantages of aggression. Earlier mobilization may mean initial victories; these encourage his soldiers and discourage the enemy's. Initial success, again, may well have more influence on the attitude of doubtful allies or wavering neutrals than any prejudice created by aggression. Desire to keep his country's attitude correct on the face of the record seems to him an idle scruple; to permit the enemy either to grow stronger or to strike first seems a crime. When Moltke heard of Bismarck's decision not to fight France in 1867, he said: "Bismarck's standpoint is unassailable; but it will one day cost us many human lives."[1]

[1] *Memoirs of Moltke, loc. cit.* In this instance Moltke's forecast seems not to have been verified. During the three years, 1867–1870, the reorganization of the forces of the smaller German states on the Prussian model gave Germany a greater accession of strength than France secured by its military re-

And the younger Moltke (German chief of staff at the outbreak of the present war) is reported to have said, in 1913:

> The commonplaces as to the responsibility of the aggressor must be disregarded. . . . We must forestall our principal adversary as soon as there are nine chances in ten that we are going to have war.[1]

General acceptance of this military axiom would inevitably bring all nations into the attitude pictured in one of Bismarck's striking similes. He compares two European states, filled with reciprocal distrust, to two strangers meeting in a lonely wood. "If the one puts his hand in his pocket, the other cocks his revolver and, as soon as he hears the first one's hammer click, he fires."[2]

Bismarck's reflections on the relation of military aspirations to state policy are presented in many parts of his memoirs. I quote one passage:

> It is natural that, in the General Staff of the army, not only younger officers of ambition but

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forms and improved armament. That in 1867 any success comparable to that of 1870 could have been gained by Germany with smaller sacrifices is highly improbable. See Bismarck, September 16, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii., p. 150.

[1] Report of Jules Cambon, French ambassador in Berlin, May 6, 1913; French Yellow Book, no. 3.

[2] Speech of January 11, 1887.

> also strategists of experience should feel the desire to turn to account and to make clear on the pages of history the efficiency of the troops they lead and their own capacity for leadership. It would be regrettable if the warlike spirit did not thus permeate the army. The duty of keeping the effects of this spirit within the limits which the need of the people for peace may justly demand, rests upon the political and not upon the military heads of the state. That the General Staff and its chiefs, . . . even down to the most recent period, have permitted themselves to be misled into imperilling peace, lies in the necessary spirit of the institution. . . . It becomes dangerous only under a monarch whose policy lacks sense of proportion and capacity of resisting one-sided and constitutionally unjustifiable influences.[1]

Throughout the reign of William I, as Bismarck here implies, diplomacy had a fair hearing whenever military considerations threatened to thwart the attainment of its ends. That the case for diplomacy was always effectively presented goes without saying; but it should be remembered that even a statesman of Bismarck's personal force and power of persuasion would have been seriously handicapped in such conflicts if he had not been able to speak with the authority of an independent and responsible minister. He had

[1] Memoirs, vol. ii., p. 93; translation, vol. ii., p. 103.

this authority because William I did not conceive that a monarch should personally direct either domestic government or diplomacy.

William II seems to have taken from the outset a different view of monarchic duty. Even before Bismarck's retirement from office, the old prince had prophesied that the young emperor would some day be his own chancellor. In fact, William II appears to have taken into his own hands, among other matters, the direct control of Germany's foreign policy. It is therefore hardly an exaggeration to say that, in conflicts between military strategy and diplomacy, not only has the decision rested with the emperor, but the effective representation of the diplomatic view has also devolved upon him. His chancellors have been vice-chancellors; his foreign secretaries have been under-secretaries. When the chancellorship was held by men of such intelligence and force as Hohenlohe and Bülow, they were doubtless able to exercise no little influence. During the chancellorship of Caprivi and that of Bethmann-Hollweg, the imperial initiative seems to have been subjected to less restraint. Direct monarchic government, however, inevitably tends to draw into ministerial office men of the Caprivi type rather than men of the Hohenlohe type.

Not only are they easier to get, but it is easier to keep them. When, in connection with the first of the "chancellor crises" after Bismarck's retirement, the German press commented on the scarcity of suitable candidates, Bismarck wrote:

> To find persons who, by virtue of their talents as well as their character, seem indicated for the position of imperial chancellor, but who represent no convictions of their own, is of course no easy matter.[1]

And in his memoirs he warned his countrymen of the dangers of direct monarchic government:

> Former rulers had more regard for capacity than for obedience in their advisers. If obedience alone is the criterion, demands will be made on the all-round endowment of the monarch which even Frederick the Great could not meet, although in his time the conduct of the state in war and in peace was less difficult than it is today.[2]

The danger that, under such a system, political considerations may be subordinated to military judgments is perhaps greater in Prussia than in other monarchic states, because the princes of the house of Hohenzollern are, by tradition and by training, soldiers first and only secondarily politicians.

[1] March 14, 1893, in Hofmann, vol. ii., p. 217.
[2] Memoirs, vol. ii., p. 265; translation, vol. ii., p. 290.

VII

That in 1914 the Austrian and German governments succumbed to the peril which Bismarck always successfully resisted, that they sacrificed the moral and political advantages of the defensive position to the strategic advantages of the prompt attack, is clear on the face of the record. The rapidity with which they acted is in itself conclusive. If they desired to avert a general war, the space of eight days (July 23–31) was obviously insufficient to obtain an adjustment of the differences between Austria and Russia; and it proved insufficient even to reach an agreement on any method by which these differences might be adjusted. If, on the other hand, Austria and Germany expected and were ready to risk a general war, they could not hope within so short a time to force Russia against its will to any overt act of hostility.

According to the military plan of the Central Empires, Austria was to crush Serbia before Russia could effectively intervene. If Russia could be restrained from intervention, well and good. Austria's position in the Balkan peninsula would be strengthened, and its prestige would be enhanced. If, however, Russia should intervene,

France would probably support Russia; and in that case Germany was to cripple France before the slow-moving Russian masses could seriously threaten Austria-Hungary or Germany. This plan, which was not first formed in 1914,[1] was revealed in all its essential details at the outbreak of the war. In the published diplomatic correspondence we can see how it controlled all the negotiations and thwarted every effort of Teutonic diplomacy to maintain even the semblance of a pacific attitude.[2]

That Austria and Germany expected to succeed in localizing the Austro-Serbian war seems improbable.[3] The fact that their diplomatists steadily asserted such an expectation is quite explicable; they were steadily maintaining that Russia had

[1] See dispatch of the French ambassador in Berlin, May 6, 1913; French Yellow Book, no. 3. See also the revelations of Giolitti, above, p. 44, and the report of the Serbian minister in Vienna, Serbian Blue Book, no. 31.

[2] That other governments besides those of Germany and of Austria were influenced by strategic considerations is indubitable. This is particularly clear in the case of Russia; Russian Orange Book, no. 48; Austrian Red Book, no. 47; French Yellow Book, nos. 103, 118; British Blue Book, nos. 44, 70, 97, 113. Neither Russia nor its allies, however, allowed military considerations so to control their policy as to lose the moral and political advantages of the defensive position.

[3] "We were well aware that any eventual military action by Austria-Hungary against Serbia might bring Russia into the field and thus, in accordance with our duty as allies, involve us in war." German White Book, p. 5.

no reason to intervene, and they could not well say that they expected Russia to act unreasonably. If, indeed, Great Britain had aided the Central Empires in their effort to restrain Russia, as the German Foreign Office urged it to do,[1] and as the German chancellor[2] subsequently asserted that it should have done, it is at least possible (although not, as he affirmed, certain) that Austria would have been permitted to chastise Serbia without Russian interference. That Germany expected Great Britain to follow any such course—to cut loose from the Triple Entente and to support the policy of the Central Empires—is, however, hardly credible. And it must not be forgotten that Russia warned Austria and Germany, on July 24 and later, that it could not remain indifferent to the fate of Serbia.[3]

On the other hand, British, Italian, and Serbian diplomatists were of the opinion that Germany and Austria did not think Russia in earnest,[4] at least not until July 29.[5] And, according to the Russian foreign minister, the German ambassador

[1] British Blue Book, nos. 11, 46.

[2] Speech in the Reichstag, December 2, 1914.

[3] Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 15; German White Book, p. 8, no. 4; Russian Orange Book, no. 10.

[4] British Blue Book, nos. 32, 71, 80; French Yellow Book, nos. 50, 96; Serbian Blue Book, no. 52.

[5] British Blue Book, no. 94.

at St. Petersburg assured his government that Russia would not go to war,[1] and "completely broke down" on learning that war was inevitable.[2]

Whatever hope existed, in Austria or in Germany, that Russia would refrain from armed intervention apparently rested on the military judgment that Russia was not in a position to wage an important war and might be deterred by threats. On July 28 the Austrian foreign minister urged upon the German Foreign Office the advisability of making it clear at St. Petersburg that Russian mobilization

> would necessarily be answered by the most extensive military counter-measures, both on the part of Austria-Hungary and of the allied German Empire. . . . Plain language seems to me at this moment the most efficacious means of making Russia comprehend the full import of an attitude of menace.[3]

It appears to have been the plan of the Austrian Foreign Office, in case Russia could not be deterred from supporting Serbia, to throw upon that empire the burden and odium of attacking Austria. The military plan of campaign, however, which demanded prompt and vigorous action against Serbia, led the Dual Monarchy to assume an uncompromising and provocative

[1] *Ibid.*, no. 139.
[2] *Ibid.*, no. 97.
[3] Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 42.

attitude. In order to forestall any offer of mediation, the Austrian Foreign Office at first refused to discuss with Russia or with any other power the demands it addressed to Serbia. The Austrian foreign minister informed the Austrian ambassador at London, July 23, that "the requirements which we demand that Serbia should fulfil . . . can not be made the subject of negotiations and compromise."[1] The German Foreign Office anticipated this attitude: on July 22 the German foreign secretary explained to the British chargé d'affaires at Berlin that

> the question at issue was one for settlement between Serbia and Austria alone, and that there should be no interference from outside in the discussions between those two countries.[2]

For this attitude the Austrian foreign minister gave typically military reasons. On July 28, the day on which Austria declared war on Serbia, he informed the British ambassador at Vienna that

> Austria-Hungary can not delay warlike proceedings against Serbia and would have to decline any suggestion of negotiations on the basis of the Serbian reply. The prestige of the Dual Monarchy

[1] Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 9.

[2] British Blue Book, no. 2. See also circular dispatch of the German chancellor, German White Book, no. 1b.

was engaged, and nothing could now prevent conflict.[1]

Without using the word "prestige," the German Foreign Office indicated the existence at Vienna of a degree of touchiness closely related to the duellist's sense of honour. Germany hesitated to urge the Austrian authorities to moderation, because "any idea that they were being pressed would be likely to cause them to precipitate matters."[2]

After the declaration of war against Serbia, Austria, as we have seen, modified its attitude. The military authorities had carried their main point, and the diplomatists were permitted to exercise their now harmless arts. The point of honour, having served its purpose, was waived: Austria agreed to accept mediation in its controversy with Serbia, provided Russia would arrest

[1] British Blue Book, no. 61. See also Austro-Hungarian Red Book, introduction to the English translation, p. iv.

[2] British Blue Book, nos. 76, 107, and Russian Orange Book, no. 51. It is an interesting fact that the one European power whose "prestige" seems to have been in question was Austria. In the correspondence published by the different governments we find the word used only in reference to Austria. It was employed to explain the Austrian attitude, not only by Austrian diplomatists (first by the Austrian minister at Belgrade, July 21, Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 6), but also by Italian, French, Serbian, and Russian diplomatists, all evidently echoing Teutonic statements; British Blue Book, nos. 38, 76; Serbian Blue Book, no. 25; Russian Orange Book, no. 14.

its military preparations. Russia agreed to do this, if Austria would stay its military action against Serbia. At no time, however, did Austria show any disposition to accept this last condition. It would arrest its preparations against Russia in Galicia, but not its action against Serbia. On this point its attitude was inflexible.[1]

It is difficult, after a careful examination of the documents published by the Austrian and Russian governments, to see how the British ambassador at Vienna reached the opinion that "an arrangement seemed almost in sight."[2] The Austrian ambassador in St. Petersburg reported to his government, on July 31, that the conversations had so far been carried on "without bringing the views of the two parties essentially nearer to each other."[3] So far as Austria was concerned, these negotiations appear to have been, as the Russian diplomatists thought them to be, purely "dilatory."[4] They were intended to delay Rus-

[1] Austro-Hungarian Red Book, nos. 48, 51; Russian Orange Book, no. 66.

[2] British Blue Book, no. 161, at p. 83.

[3] Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 55.

[4] Russian Orange Book, nos. 53, 60; British Blue Book, no. 88. See also French Yellow Book, no. 121, where the French ambassador at Berlin raises (August 1) the question whether Austria had any object in view except to throw upon Russia responsibility for the war.

sian action against Austria without delaying Austrian action against Serbia.

This, so far as it went, was correct diplomacy. It was calculated to lessen, although it could not remove, the bad impression created by Austria's previous refusal to admit any discussion of its relations to Serbia. Correct also was the attitude of the Austrian Foreign Office in the matter of mobilization against Russia. Beyond the preparations required for its campaign against Serbia, the Dual Monarchy would restrict itself, Count Berchtold declared, to such measures as seemed necessary in order to meet Russian mobilization. He insisted that such measures were not to be regarded as hostile acts "on either side."[1] Nor did he treat general Russian mobilization as an act of war. On July 31, the day on which the Russian government issued general mobilization orders, he telegraphed to London and to St. Petersburg:

> Despite the change in the situation which has resulted from Russia's mobilization, we are quite ready to consider the proposal of Sir Edward Grey to mediate between us and Serbia.[2]

[1] Austro-Hungarian Red Book, nos. 50, 53; British Blue Book, no. 118.

[2] *Ibid.*, no. 51.

Later in the day he telegraphed to all the Austro-Hungarian embassies:

> In the meantime the conversations between the cabinets at Vienna and at St. Petersburg, which are suitable to the situation and which, we hope, will remove disquietude on all sides, are still in progress.[1]

The Austrian and German Foreign Offices seem to have acted in concert, the Austrian following the German lead, until July 31. The decision reached at Berlin, on that day, to treat Russian mobilization as an act of war, clearly took the Austrian Foreign Office by surprise. The Austro-Hungarian Red Book gives no further utterances of Count Berchtold until August 5, when he telegraphed to the Austrian ambassador at St. Petersburg:

> In view of the menacing attitude assumed by Russia in the conflict between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Serbia, and in view of the fact that, in consequence of this conflict, Russia has seen fit, *according to a communication from the cabinet at Berlin*, to open hostilities against Germany, and that the latter power is consequently in a state of war with the former, Austria-Hungary considers itself likewise in a state of war with Russia.[2]

[1] Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 53.

[2] *Ibid.*, no. 59; Russian Orange Book, no. 79. The italics are the author's.

Count Berchtold waited five days before he sent this declaration of war, and it is very carefully worded. Because a conflict has arisen between Austria and Serbia, in which Russia claims to be concerned and threatens to intervene, Russia has opened hostilities against Germany. At least this is what Berlin says. Austria accepts this statement, recognizes its obligations, and comes to the aid of its ally. In view, however, of the fact that the alleged opening of hostilities consisted in the issue by Russia of general mobilization orders before Germany had taken similar overt action, and in view of the further fact that Count Berchtold had repeatedly informed Europe that mobilization was not a hostile act, he was naturally disinclined to affirm, as a fact within his own knowledge, that Russia had opened hostilities.[1] He accordingly leaves with the German government the entire responsibility both for this assertion and for the interruption of the negotiations which were to exhibit Austria's peaceful inclinations and to force upon Russia the burden of aggression.

[1] On August 2, indeed, Count Berchtold was informed by the Austrian ambassador at Berlin that Russian troops had crossed the German frontier; Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 57. Germany, however, had sent its ultimatum to Russia July 31, and had declared war August 1.

There is evidence that the German Foreign Office also, if left to its own devices, would have tried to play the diplomatic game on Bismarckian lines, both as regarded readiness to negotiate and as regarded delay in overt military preparations against Russia. On July 24, Sir Edward Grey telegraphed to Sir Horace Rumbold, British chargé d'affaires at Berlin, an account of a conversation with the German ambassador at London. He had said to Prince Lichnowsky, among other things:

> The only chance I could see of mediating or moderating influence being effective was that the four powers, Germany, Italy, France, and ourselves, should work together simultaneously at Vienna and St. Petersburg in favour of moderation, in the event of the relations between Austria and Russia becoming threatening.[1]

On the following day, the German foreign secretary, von Jagow, told Rumbold that

> the last thing Germany wanted was a general war, and he would do all in his power to prevent such a calamity. If the relations between Austria and Russia became threatening, he was quite ready to fall in with your suggestion as to the four powers working in favour of moderation at Vienna and at St. Petersburg.[2]

[1] British Blue Book, no. 11. [2] *Ibid.*, no. 18.

On July 26, Grey telegraphed to the British embassies at Berlin, Paris, and Rome, suggesting that representatives of Germany, France, and Italy be instructed to meet immediately with him in conference, "for the purpose of discovering an issue which would prevent complications."[1] This suggestion, which was promptly accepted by the French and Italian Foreign Offices,[2] was favourably received by von Jagow. The French ambassador, Jules Cambon, reported on July 27:

> Today I have had a conversation with the secretary of state on the proposal by England that Germany should act jointly with the cabinets of London, Paris, and Rome to prevent hostilities between St. Petersburg and Vienna. . . . Herr von Jagow replied that he was disposed to join in (*disposé à y entrer*) . . .[3]

His superiors, however, were not so disposed. On the same day, apparently at about the same time when von Jagow was indicating his favourable attitude toward the proposed conference, the German chancellor telegraphed to Prince Lichnowsky:

> It is impossible for us to draw our ally, in its dispute with Serbia, before a European court. Our

[1] *Ibid.*, no. 36.
[2] *Ibid.*, nos. 42, 49; French Yellow Book, nos. 71, 72.
[3] French Yellow Book, no. 67.

mediatory activity must be limited to the peril of an Austro-Russian conflict.[1]

In announcing this decision to the British ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, on the following day, the chancellor varied his phrase; the proposed conference was compared to an "Areopagus." He insisted, as Berlin had steadily insisted since July 22, that Austria's quarrel with Serbia was "a purely Austrian concern with which Russia had nothing to do."[2]

It is obvious that the dispute between Austria and Russia could not have been discussed at the proposed conference without discussing the dispute between Austria and Serbia. In diplomacy, however, forms of speech are of no slight importance. They are of especial importance when national honour or prestige is felt or claimed to be involved. For this reason Grey had avoided any mention of Serbia. He had, of course, another reason; he had steadily asserted that Great Britain would not go to war to protect Serbia and was not concerned in the controversy

[1] German White Book, no. 12. Precisely the same language is used by the Austrian ambassador at Berlin in notifying his government, on July 28, of the decision reached at Berlin July 27 (see Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 35), and in the introductory narrative in the German White Book, at p. 6.

[2] British Blue Book, no. 72.

between Austria and Serbia, save in so far as it threatened to lead to a general war. The German chancellor, however, insisted on ignoring the existence of any issue between Austria and Russia. In the dispute between Austria and Serbia, he was still solicitous concerning Austrian prestige, which Germany was still protecting and was to continue to protect for another forty-eight hours.

It is equally obvious that Grey was not proposing to institute any sort of court.[1] A conference such as he suggested had been held in London in 1913, and it had succeeded in averting a European war over the Balkan question. He was really proposing nothing more than conversations between representatives of the four European powers not primarily interested, in order to discover, if possible, some arrangements that would be acceptable to Austria and to Russia. Here again the form of words was important. Grey chose a form adapted to spare Austrian susceptibilities.[2] Bethmann-Hollweg translated Grey's proposal into

[1] This was at once made clear, both by the British ambassador at Berlin, July 27, and by Sir Edward Grey, July 28; British Blue Book, nos. 43, 67.

[2] The German ambassador in Paris thought the term "conference" objectionable. He told the French foreign minister that "the Austro-Hungarian government was particularly susceptible when such words as 'mediation,' 'intervention,' 'conference' were uttered, and was more likely to accept 'friendly

a form of words that was adapted to excite national resentment both in Austria and in Germany.

Overruled by his superiors, von Jagow was obliged to reverse his attitude. On the same day, July 27, on which he had told Cambon that he was disposed to go into the conference, he had to tell Cambon and Goschen that Germany would take no part in any such conference.[1] In these later interviews, however, there was no mention of Serbia; Grey's proposal was discussed as an attempt to avoid war between Austria and Russia. It is also worth noting, although it is not surprising, that von Jagow seemed unwilling to call the proposed conference a court. In his interviews with Cambon the word was not used. In his colloquy with Goschen he qualified the chancellor's phrase, saying that the proposed conference "would practically amount to a court of arbitration."[2]

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counsels' and 'conversations'"; French Yellow Book, no. 70. At this time, however, German vicarious susceptibility for Austria exceeded that exhibited by the Austrian government itself; see above, pp. 90–91.

[1] British Blue Book, no. 43; French Yellow Book, no. 74.

[2] It is evident that Goschen was struck by the qualification of the term "court." He reported the colloquy to Cambon, who sent the story to Paris the same day, July 27; and in Cambon's report we read that von Jagow told Goschen that the proposed conference would be "a sort of court of arbitration" ("une espèce de cour d'arbitrage"); French Yellow Book, no. 73.

It seems clear that Germany's real objection was not to the conference itself, but to Grey's suggestion that "all active military operations should be suspended pending the results of the conference." To arrest Austria's operations against Serbia would have deranged the military plan of campaign.

As regards overt military preparations against Russia, von Jagow's attitude was identical with that of Count Berchtold, and in accord with Bismarck's practice of keeping always one step behind the prospective adversary. In his first conversation with the French ambassador on July 27, the German foreign secretary said that "if Russia mobilized, Germany would be obliged to mobilize as well." In reply to Cambon's question, "if Germany would believe herself bound to mobilize in the event of Russia mobilizing only on her Austrian frontier," von Jagow replied in the negative. He added that

> if Russia attacked Austria, Germany would have to attack at once on her side. The proposed British intervention in St. Petersburg and Vienna could therefore . . . become effective only if events were not precipitated.[1]

[1] *Ibid.*, no. 67. Von Jagow made the same statements to the British ambassador; British Blue Book, no. 43.

Events, however, were precipitated. On July 30, on the basis of information received from one of the other ambassadors in Berlin, Cambon reported to Paris:

> According to the under-secretary of state, the military authorities are urging strongly that mobilization should be decreed, on the ground that any delay will lose Germany some of her advantages. Up to the present, however, it has been possible to resist successfully the haste of the General Staff, which in mobilization sees war.[1]

Later in the same day, Cambon had a conversation with von Jagow, in which the latter expressed his fear that

> Austria might mobilize completely in consequence of the partial Russian mobilization, which might bring about the answering blow of total Russian mobilization and, in consequence, that of Germany. I pointed out to the secretary of state that he himself had said to me that Germany would not consider herself forced to mobilize unless Russia mobilized upon the German frontiers, and that such was not the case. He replied that that was true, but that the heads of the army were insistent, on the ground that all delay was a loss of strength to the German army, and that "the words of which I reminded him did not constitute on his part a binding engagement."[2]

[1] French Yellow Book, no. 105. [2] *Ibid.*, no. 109.

Two days later, August 1, von Jagow had to tell the British ambassador that Germany had answered Russian mobilization, not with German mobilization, but with an ultimatum demanding that Russia demobilize, and, having received no answer, was about to declare war.[1] For this decision he had, of course, no explanation except on strategic grounds:

> Russia had said that her mobilization did not necessarily imply war, and that she could perfectly well remain mobilized for months without making war. This was not the case with Germany. She had the speed and Russia had the numbers, and the safety of the German Empire forbade that Germany should allow Russia time to bring up masses of troops from all parts of her wide dominions.[2]

After the German government had decided to demand Russian demobilization, the German foreign secretary abandoned the attempt to answer questions. On July 31, the British ambassador, acting on instructions from London,[3] asked von

[1] Precisely this result had been anticipated by the German ambassador in St. Petersburg. As early as July 26, he warned the Russian foreign minister that, if Russia mobilized, "the purely military judgment of the general staffs would find utterance, and if the button was once pressed in Berlin, there would be no possibility of stopping the affair." Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 28.

[2] British Blue Book, no. 138.

[3] *Ibid.*, no. 114.

Jagow whether Germany would respect the neutrality of Belgium. The latter replied, according to Goschen's report, that

> he must consult the emperor and the chancellor before he could possibly answer. I gathered from what he said that he thought any reply they might give could not but disclose a certain amount of their plan of campaign in the event of war ensuing, and he was therefore very doubtful whether they would return any answer at all.[1]

In fact no answer was given until four days later, on August 4, when the German troops had already crossed the Belgian frontier. Then von Jagow again had to explain Germany's action; and again he could defend it only on strategic grounds:

> They had to advance into France by the quickest and easiest way, so as to be able to get well ahead with their operations and endeavour to strike some decisive blow as early as possible. It was a matter of life and death for them, as, if they had gone by the more southern route, they could not have hoped . . . to have got through without formidable opposition entailing great loss of time. This loss of time would have meant time gained by the Russians for bringing up their troops to the German frontier. Rapidity of action was the great German

[1] British Blue Book, no. 122. See also French Yellow Book, no. 123.

asset, while that of Russia was an inexhaustible supply of troops.[1]

On the following day, Under-Secretary Zimmermann expressed to Baron Beyens, the Belgian minister at Berlin, "with much emotion, his profound regrets." To the minister's remonstrances he replied:

> The Department for Foreign Affairs was powerless. Since the order for mobilization had been issued by the emperor, all power now belonged to the military authorities. It was they who had considered the invasion of Belgium to be an indispensable operation of war.[2]

In his telegram of August 10 to the president of the United States, the German emperor gave the same explanation: the neutrality of Belgium had "to be violated on strategical grounds."[3]

The conduct of Austro-German diplomacy during the critical period, July 23–31, is open to censure alike from the strategist and from the diplomatist. If for strategic reasons the "commonplaces as to the responsibility of the aggressor" were to be disregarded, why was an ultimatum not sent to Russia earlier? Why did the Central

[1] British Blue Book, no. 160, at p. 78.
[2] Second Belgian Grey Book, no. 52.
[3] Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany* (1917), p. 202.

Empires not demand, as soon as Austria had declared war on Serbia, that Russia pledge itself to keep the peace? On the other hand, if the diplomatic game was to be played at all, why not play it from the start and why not play it out? The least defensible of policies is a vacillating policy.

In the present state of our information it is as difficult to say why conversations between Vienna and St. Petersburg were opened on the 30th of July as to explain why they were cut off at midnight on the 31st. Military opposition to negotiations was, of course, lessened by the Austrian declaration of war against Serbia on July 28. From the military point of view, however, negotiations with Russia were still objectionable, because any delay would deprive Germany of some part of the advantage of superior military preparation. Why then did Berlin change its attitude on July 29, and advise Vienna to open conversations with St. Petersburg? The only theory that seems at all plausible is that of the French ambassador in Berlin. Writing on July 29, he reported that the German chancellor had promised to urge upon Vienna direct negotiations with St. Petersburg, and he added:

> The chancellor's attitude is very probably the result of the last interview of Sir Edward Grey with Prince Lichnowsky [German ambassador in London]. Up to these very last few days people have flattered themselves here that England would remain aloof, and the impression produced by her attitude upon the German government and upon financiers and business men is profound.[1]

Doubt as to Great Britain's attitude might well induce the German General Staff itself to think twice before forcing war upon Russia. Whether Germany hoped to gain its "place in the sun" by peaceful arrangements with Great Britain, or expected to develop its world power on the ruins of the British Empire, it is inconceivable that it intended to fight Great Britain at the same time that it was fighting Russia and France. And until July 29 the German government seems to have been confident that Great Britain would remain neutral. On what grounds was this confidence based?

When we read the official and unofficial explanations of Great Britain's intervention which have been advanced on the part of Germany since the outbreak of the war, and which aim to show that

[1] French Yellow Book, no. 92. The same explanation of the German change of attitude was given by the Italian minister for foreign affairs, July 30; British Blue Book, no. 106.

Great Britain had quite other reasons for intervening than Germany's breach of Belgian neutrality, our perplexity increases. When, for example, we are reminded that for centuries it has been Great Britain's policy to promote and support continental coalitions against any continental state which threatened to obtain a dominating position, especially if such a state was developing sea power, we wonder why this fact was not taken into account by the German government before the outbreak of the present war. And when we are told that to Great Britain itself—to take the German chancellor's final explanation of his famous phrase—the treaty of 1831 was only "a scrap of paper," we wonder why, in a country justly renowned for painstaking historical research, it should have been forgotten that the neutralizing of Belgium in 1831, like the creation of the kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815, was chiefly promoted by Great Britain, for the quite intelligible purpose of preventing this part of the European coast line from being used as a base for military operations against its own territory. If Belgium, as is now asserted, had become a "vassal" of Great Britain, why should the Germans have supposed that Great Britain would stand aside when this vassal state was invaded?

Some of the arguments which Germany addressed to Great Britain, in order to dissuade that power from intervening to protect France or Belgium, are quite similar to those which Austria and Germany addressed to Russia, in order to show that Russia had no reason to intervene for the protection of Serbia. Austria assured Russia that, if the war were localized, it would undertake to respect the integrity and to guarantee the continuance of the Serbian state.[1] In a conversation with the British ambassador on July 29, the German chancellor, after stating that it was clear to him "that Great Britain would never stand by and allow France to be crushed," proceeded to reassure the ambassador:

> That, however, was not the object at which Germany aimed. Provided that the neutrality of Great Britain were certain, every assurance would be given to the British government that the imperial government aimed at no territorial acquisition at the expense of France should they prove victorious in any war that might ensue.[2]

In the same conversation, the German chancellor said that if, in consequence of the action of

[1] Austro-Hungarian Red Book, introduction, p. vi., and nos. 14, 26, 32; German White Book, p. 8 and nos. 3, 10, 10a, 10b; Russian Orange Book, nos. 28, 35, 60; British Blue Book, nos. 47, 48, 59; French Yellow Book, no. 62.

[2] British Blue Book, no. 85.

France, Germany should be forced to enter upon operations in Belgium, "Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany." And on August 4 the German foreign secretary instructed the German ambassador in London to repeat "most positively the formal assurance that, even in the case of armed conflict with Belgium, Germany will, under no pretext whatever, annex Belgian territory."[1] In each case there appears to have been an assumption that such an undertaking would be satisfactory; that any result of war short of annexation would be unobjectionable. The Russian objection to the crushing of Serbia, however, and the British objection to the crushing of France rested chiefly on the recognition that either event would seriously disturb the balance of power in the Balkans and in Europe. From the political point of view, it is not by annexation alone that the balance of power is affected. If, as a result of war, Serbia became politically dependent on Austria, or France were seriously weakened, the balance of power would be disturbed. The difference would be one of degree only. Similarly as regards Belgium: if that country were used as a base of military operations against France, a precedent

[1] British Blue Book, no. 157.

would be created for using it, in a future war, as a base of operations against England. This peril might be greater if Belgium were annexed by Germany, but it would not be obviated by the re-establishment of Belgium as a nominally independent and neutralized state. Here again the difference would be in degree only. To the military man, on the other hand, the balance of power appears to be seriously disturbed only by annexation, because only in such event can the victorious state build fortresses and levy troops in the conquered territory. I do not mean to imply that military men do not recognize that the balance of power is affected when a country is weakened by a crushing defeat and loaded with a heavy war indemnity, or when it has become politically dependent upon the conquering power; but the difference between these results and outright annexation seems to them, I think, one of kind rather than one of degree. If the Austrian and German governments seriously expected these proffered pledges to influence the action of Russia or of Great Britain, the point of view which they took, and apparently assumed that Russia and Great Britain would also take, was, I suggest, military rather than political.

By July 29, however, if not earlier, the Austrian

and German governments had ample reason to believe that Russia would probably intervene and that Great Britain might intervene.[1] By August 1, if not earlier, they knew that a German invasion of Belgium would make it "extremely difficult to restrain public feeling in England."[2] Why then did Germany precipitate the continental war by its ultimatum to Russia and give Great Britain formal cause for war by the invasion of Belgium? Partly, beyond a doubt, because the greater the number of Germany's possible antagonists, the more necessary it seemed to utilize fully by prompt action the advantages of superior military preparation; partly also, and perhaps mainly, because all along Austria and Germany had counted, in the case of Russia, on internal dissensions and possible foreign compli-

[1] For British warnings, which became increasingly grave in tone, see British Blue Book, Introductory Narrative and nos. 46, 48 (July 27), 89 (July 29), 101, 102 (July 30), 109, 111 (July 31). On July 29 the German ambassador in London told Sir Edward Grey that he had already given in Berlin the same view of the situation which Sir Edward had just presented to him (*ibid.*, no. 89); and on July 30 the German imperial chancellor told the British ambassador in Berlin that "he had heard with regret, but not exactly with surprise" of the warning given to the German ambassador in London (*ibid.*, no. 98).

[2] British Blue Book, no. 123. See also the dispatch from the German ambassador in London to the German imperial chancellor; *Collected Diplomatic Documents*, p. 541.

cations[1] and, in the case of Great Britain, on the imminence of civil war in Ireland[2] and the possibility of revolts in India, in Egypt, and in South Africa. If these difficulties and dangers did not deter Russia or Great Britain from war, they would at least make it difficult for either of them to wage war efficiently. In case of Great Britain, the German government apparently hoped to the last that peril of sedition would prove deterrent. They could not have believed that a German attack could be launched against France through Belgium without arousing the strongest resentment in Great Britain; they could not have believed that Great Britain would not wish to fight; but they persuaded themselves that it would be unable to fight. They reached this conclusion, however, only by ignoring the fact, familiar to every student of history, that foreign war usually allays and often ends internal dissensions. Today, not only is this point appreciated in Germany, but we are told that Great Britain went to war in order to shelve the Irish question!

Upon the question whether the German govern-

[1] British Blue Book, nos. 32, 71; French Yellow Book, no. 35.

[2] French Yellow Book, no. 35. It will be remembered that there was armed conflict, accompanied by loss of life, in Dublin, July 26.

ment expected to use Belgium as a military highway into France without encountering Belgian resistance, or anticipated and possibly desired resistance, I do not venture to express an opinion. It is obvious that Belgian resistance enabled the invaders to use not only the territory but also all the resources of this country in the prosecution of the war and opened the way for its annexation in case of German victory; but to infer that, in view of these immediate and prospective advantages, the German government not only reckoned with but hoped for resistance, would be to attribute to that government intentions which it has not admitted and with which it should not be charged without conclusive evidence. If, however, Germany expected to go through Belgium without fighting the Belgians, this expectation must have rested upon the military consideration that resistance on the part of the Belgian militia was so utterly hopeless as to be inconceivable. From the purely military point of view, even the Belgian General Staff could hardly have reached a different conclusion. It is, of course, evident that in permitting the passage of German troops, Belgium would have ceased to be neutral and would have given France and Great Britain cause for war; but it would have had German

support against these countries, with a German guaranty of its territorial integrity at the close of the war. And in case of German defeat, France and Great Britain might well have recognized the excuse of duress, *vis major*. The sentiments that determined Belgian resistance to Germany—love of independence, fidelity to treaty engagements, and resentment against flagrant wrong—are of precisely the sort which the military mind is apt to undervalue. They are imponderables.

This study of the Austro-German diplomacy seems to lead to fairly definite conclusions. Military, not political, opinion decided that war was, if not desirable, at least inevitable. Military strategy robbed diplomacy, not only of the time necessary to manœuvre the adversaries into aggression, but even of opportunity to show a decent reluctance to engage in war. Military strategy decided that the war must be carried at the outset through Belgium into France, leaving to diplomacy only the hopeless task of getting the German armies through Belgium into France without war with Great Britain. In the event of German defeat, the German diplomatists will doubtless be made the scapegoats. That, however, will be unjust; for they really had no chance.

In assuming the control of diplomacy, military

strategy appears to have defeated its own aims. Whatever may be the final outcome of the war, the original plan of campaign proved unsuccessful. It failed by a narrow margin, apparently, but it failed. At the end of the first year of the war neither Serbia nor France was crushed. And the original plan of campaign in the West seems to have failed because of the unexpectedly obstinate resistance of the Belgians and of the French and the unexpectedly prompt assistance given by Great Britain. The most formidable fighting machine in the world proved to be unable to perform the task imposed upon it by its leaders; and the error in their calculations was undervaluation of the imponderables.

VIII

From the outbreak of the war there has been, not only in the countries opposed to Germany, but also in neutral countries, a very general assertion that "militarism" is responsible. There has been also a general assumption that German or Prussian militarism is a unique phenomenon; that it differs from anything resembling militarism to be found in other countries, not in degree only, but also in kind.

What do we really mean when we assert that a state is militaristic? It is clear, I think, that a state is not necessarily militaristic because it is prepared for war. It is not necessarily militaristic because it holds all its able-bodied male citizens to military service, as is the case in Switzerland, nor because it holds them to three years of training, as is the case in France, nor because it has a powerful navy, as is the case with the United States. Nor is a state militaristic because it has a large body of professional military officers whose duty it is to form plans for the conduct of war, and who are apt to regard war with other feelings than those of the normal civilian. A nation is militaristic just in so far as the views and feelings natural and almost necessary in its army and navy are shared by its civilians, especially by those who are able to direct national thought and to create national sentiment. In a nation, as in an individual, militarism is a state of mind. The more fully a national mind is militarized, the more difficult it becomes for the political heads of the state to subordinate military to political considerations. They may even fail to give due weight to purely political considerations, because their own minds have been militarized. When this happens, the state itself has become militaristic.

The peril that foreign policy may be controlled by considerations of military strategy is of course greatest in such a state. It is, however, not confined to such a state. The characteristics of the military mind are everywhere the same, and the antithesis between the military mind and the political mind is not only perpetual but universal. Military appreciation of the advantages of the attack will always and everywhere tend to rob diplomacy of the time necessary to accomplish its proper tasks and may direct any government into unwise and possibly disastrous action. And if this peril is particularly great under personal government, it must be remembered that in monarchies and republics alike, under every system of government which obtains in the civilized world, the conduct of diplomacy is personal: under the superior control of the person who is actually the chief executive, whether he be emperor, king, president or prime minister, it is in the hands of the secretary or minister of foreign affairs. To show that Great Britain and the United States may be exposed to the same perils to which Austria and Germany succumbed in 1914, two illustrations must suffice.

When in April, 1912, the British military attaché in Brussels, Lieutenant-Colonel Bridges, told

the Belgian general with whom he was conferring that, in case of necessity, the British government would land troops in Belgium without waiting for any invitation from that country,[1] he neither committed the Belgian government to any such arrangement, since the Belgian general protested that Belgian consent was necessary, nor did he commit his own government, because, fortunately, he had no power to do so. He gave, however, a typical illustration of the incapacity of the military man to appreciate the importance of keeping one's country in a correct attitude on the face of the record.

On the eve of the Spanish-American War, the acting secretary of our navy, Theodore Roosevelt, urged President McKinley and his cabinet to notify the Spanish government that, if it should send its battle-fleet into American waters, we should treat such action as a declaration of war, and that, if the fleet then sailed, we should attack it on the high seas.[2] Here we have a classical example of the danger that even the civilian, if charged with military responsibility and preoccupied with military problems, may accept the

[1] See above, pp. 64–65.

[2] Letter of Theodore Roosevelt to the author, March 24, 1915. See Appendix, pp. 273 *et seq.*

essentially military view that precautionary measures taken by a possible adversary are to be treated as hostile acts. If our government had adopted such a course, our conduct would have been like that of Germany in declaring war because Russia was mobilizing. In our political system, fortunately, we follow the English tradition—which Bismarck vainly tried to establish in Germany—that the military administration is to be held under strict political control. President McKinley and his cabinet did not accept Mr. Roosevelt's suggestion; and if at the time Mr. Roosevelt had been president, I venture to doubt whether he would have followed the course which, as acting secretary of the navy, he felt bound to propose.

I have spoken thus far only of the dangers which a nation incurs by permitting its diplomacy to be controlled by strategic considerations. There is, however, a far broader aspect to the problem. Of all means which civilization has provided to avert war, negotiation is the most important. Direct negotiation may be, and often is, supplemented by the friendly offices of nations not immediately concerned and by offers of mediation; but these are only extensions of negotiation. Arbitration is a potent agency for the peaceful settlement of controversies, but arbitration can-

not be set in motion without negotiation. For negotiation time is essential. In the interest of the peace of the world, therefore, it is of the highest importance that the political heads of every state should be ever on their guard against the attempts of their military advisers to convince them that immediate attack is necessary. It is usually declared to be a matter of life or death. To the nation primarily concerned it is, in most instances, only a matter of greater or less chance of initial success. To peace, however, it is always a matter of death.

Diplomacy versus Military Strategy

How the Central Empires Might Have Played the Diplomatic Game

DIPLOMACY VERSUS MILITARY STRATEGY

HOW THE CENTRAL EMPIRES MIGHT HAVE PLAYED THE DIPLOMATIC GAME

I

AFTER Prince Bismarck ceased to direct German politics from the Imperial Chancellery, he continued his efforts to mould public opinion through the press. With the *Hamburger Nachrichten* he established relations which would be described today as those of a "contributing editor." In a leading article in that journal, on January 9, 1893, he made a statement which is of marked interest at the present time. Like numerous utterances in his speeches and certain passages in his memoirs, this statement seems to have been intended to counteract the notion, which since 1875 had been a fixed idea in German military circles, that Germany would not be safe until France was completely crushed.

In view of our fortifications in Strassburg, Metz, Mayence, and Coblenz, Field-Marshal Moltke

was so convinced of the strength of our military position on the western frontier that he regarded it as possible, in case war should break out on two fronts, that we should limit ourselves to the defensive on the western frontier until the Russian war was conducted to an end. He was of the opinion that, with our railroad communications and fortifications on the western frontier, the French could not so conduct the war as to break through our lines; and he accordingly believed that we could carry the Russian war to a conclusion and then first, as against France, pass over from the defensive to the attack.[1]

As it was generally known that the *Hamburger Nachrichten* was Bismarck's organ, this revelation aroused interest and gave rise to controversy. On January 16, Bismarck repeated his statement and at the same time indicated his own opinion:

It is an indubitable fact that Count Moltke expressed himself in this sense, and that he was of the opinion that Germany, in possession of Metz and Strassburg, with Mayence, Cologne, and Coblenz behind, could, in case of a double war, maintain the defensive against France for an indefinite time and meanwhile employ its chief force in the East. . . . We should regard it as presumptuous to attempt to support the views of the great strategist with our own opinion; but in face of the skeptical articles published in the *Nationalzeitung* and other similar

[1] Hofmann, *Fürst Bismarck*, vol. ii., p. 194.

utterances in the press, we should like to add that, so long as we are in possession of Metz and Strassburg and so long as we remain covered by the neutral Belgian and Luxemburg territory, a defensive conduct by Germany of the war against France would not deprive the left bank of the Rhine, but only a part of Alsace, of protection by German troops.[1]

In 1914 the German General Staff, with another Moltke at its head, put into execution an opposite plan. It was stated to be self-evident that France must be crushed before "the slow-moving Russian masses" could make any effective attack upon the Central Empires. To achieve this object, the cover of Belgian neutrality was sacrificed. The attack on France was launched across that neutral territory, as offering the line of least resistance.

The military results attained under this plan were less satisfactory to Austria than to Germany. At the close of the first period of the war, the Austrian forces had been driven out of Serbia, while the Russians were in possession of the greater part of Galicia. Germany, on the other hand, had repelled the Russian invasion of East Prussia and was in control of western Poland, of Belgium, and of an important part of north-eastern France.

[1] Hofmann, *loc. cit.*

Its main purpose, however, was not attained: France was not crushed. During the second phase of the war, in 1915, Germany reverted to the plan of campaign suggested by the elder Moltke. It held itself on the defensive in the West and endeavoured to "carry the Russian war to a conclusion."

In view of these facts, it seems probable that the relative military advantages of the two plans will form the subject of much controversy in the future.[1] The purpose of the present article, however, is not primarily to discuss this problem, but to compare the diplomatic action which the military plans of the Central Empires demanded with the course which their diplomacy might with advantage have followed if the plan suggested by the elder Moltke and approved by Bismarck had been adopted.

The apparently purely military decision[2] that Serbia and France must be crushed before Russia could "bring up masses of troops from all parts of her wide dominions," and also, if possible, before the French forces were properly concentrated and fully equipped, made the time-factor

[1] Since this article was written (1915) we have heard much of the antagonistic military plans of the "Westerners" and the "Easterners."

[2] See above, pp. 86–87, 103–105.

of supreme importance. It was to save time that the Central Empires curtailed negotiation, evaded mediation, and declared war on Serbia, Russia, France, and Belgium. Whatever view be held concerning the expediency of their military action, their diplomatic action can hardly be deemed sound or even defensible. It was diametrically opposed, as we have seen, to Bismarck's theory and practice. Bismarck did not hesitate to accept or even to force a war when he believed war necessary for the attainment of his political aims, but the visible burden of aggression always rested on the shoulders of his adversaries. In his notable speech of February 6, 1888, in which he developed most clearly the moral and political advantages of the defensive position, he assumed for the sake of his argument the very contingency which, in the German official theory, arose in 1914, namely, a threatened attack upon Germany by Russia and France; and he insisted that such a peril should not be met by anticipating it. "If in the end we proceed to attack," he said, "the whole weight of the imponderables, which weigh much heavier than material weights, will be on the side of our adversaries whom we have attacked." Never has a warning been more fully justified in experience. For such military ad-

vantages as Germany secured by the rapidity of its action it has paid, is paying, and may be called upon to pay for years after peace is restored, a very heavy price. "The commonplaces as to the responsibility of the aggressor" are not so obsolete as the younger Moltke thought them. Commonplaces that embody universal sentiments are not to be disregarded with impunity. Against those who appear to be responsible for the outbreak of war, neutral as well as hostile nations always feel resentment. At the present time this resentment is stronger and more general than at any former period of history, partly because the present war is the greatest the world has known, and partly because the relations between all parts of the world are closer and the disturbances caused by war are greater and more far-reaching than ever before. Today, as Dr. Dernburg informed his countrymen in an address delivered in Berlin in September, 1915: "Germany has few friends in the world."

It is clear that the weight of the imponderables not only impeded the execution of Austro-German military plans but greatly increased the complexity of their military problem. In the countries attacked, in Russia and in France, no less than in

Serbia and in Belgium, internal dissensions were forgotten or ignored, and pacific sentiment almost entirely disappeared; for nothing so thoroughly solidifies national feeling, nothing gives a people so rapidly the fighting edge, as defensive war. In other countries as well, in countries not attacked, the weight of the imponderables made itself felt. The aggressive course pursued by the Central Empires made it easy for Italy, their ally since 1879, first to withhold its support, pledged only against attack; then to denounce its treaty of alliance with powers that were pursuing, without its consent, aims foreign to its interests; and eventually to align itself with their enemies. Italy's final decision, the Germans tell us, was "a victory of the street," that is, of popular feeling. Italian feeling, as everyone knows, was persistently anti-Austrian; but there seems to have been little anti-German feeling, and there was clearly much goodwill toward Germany, until the German armies marched through Belgium into France. As to England, it is fully established that it was the imponderables that tipped the scales for immediate war. There was undoubtedly in England a degree of sympathy with France, and there was a very general distrust of the German government; but it is clear that

English public feeling was not sensibly stirred until Germany declared war on Russia and threatened France with attack, nor was English national sentiment solidified for war until Germany invaded Belgium.

The prevailing attitude of the American people also was determined by what seemed to them the aggressive action of the Central Empires and particularly by the unprovoked German attack upon Belgium. Even among Americans of German ancestry these imponderables had weight. Support of the German cause was noticeably weaker among those born in the United States than among those born in Germany: not a few German-American households were divided in their sympathies. In their case, as in that of all Americans, the longer the line of descent, the weaker the ties that bind the living to the home of the dead.

A very material weight in the present war has been attributed by Germans and Austrians to the American exportation of military supplies. Opposition to such traffic has no basis in international law, and it is difficult to see that it has any basis in world morals. To prohibit this trade would place the non-industrial states at the mercy of those with highly developed indus-

tries. Even if the non-industrial states each maintained a store of arms and ammunition apparently sufficient for years of warfare—an arrangement not in itself desirable—novel instruments of attack might still find them unprepared; and if neutral trade in such instruments were automatically terminated by the attack of better prepared adversaries, they would be helpless. In the present war there was an unforeseen need of high explosives, to say nothing of poisonous gases. Who can tell what supplies will be needed for the next war?

In the United States, nevertheless, and particularly in the early period of the World War, there was no little opposition to this trade, and there was a demand in many quarters that an embargo should be placed upon the exportation of military supplies. This demand came primarily from Americans who were engaged in the production and sale of other goods, who found themselves deprived of their Central European markets by the action of the Entente Allies, and who saw, in the proposed embargo, a means of forcing the Allies to relax their restraints upon neutral commerce. The demand was supported by expert opinion that these restraints were not warranted by international law. It was of course supported

by all who sympathized with the Central Empires[1] or were animated by a traditional distrust of England. It was supported also by a considerable body of Americans to whom trade in military supplies seemed immoral, to whose feelings it was repugnant that men should enrich themselves by selling wares made to destroy their fellows. If this purely humanitarian reaction had been more general, it might conceivably have exercised a decisive influence. It would have been much more general if the Central Empires had not begun the war; if they had not been the assailants but the assailed. As it was, thousands of Americans, who under other circumstances would have been strongly opposed to the exportation of military supplies and would probably have favoured the proposed embargo, were dominated from the outset by the feeling that we were helping our fellowmen in the exercise of the most incontestable of rights, that of self-defence.

II

That the diplomatic action of the Central Empires in the critical days from July 23 to August 4, 1914, was not fortunate is widely re-

[1] As we now know, the agitation for an embargo was subsidized by the German government.

cognized in Germany; but the chief reason for its ill success does not seem to be generally understood. It is not generally appreciated that diplomacy may need for its purposes precisely the time which military strategy is unwilling to yield. As Bismarck explained to Hofmann:

> An indispensable requisite of the statesman is patience. He must be able to wait until the right moment has come, and must not act in too much of a hurry, however strong the temptation.[1]

If Germany had adopted the plan of military action which the elder Moltke regarded as feasible, it would apparently have been possible for Austria and Germany to conduct their diplomatic campaign on Bismarckian lines. Assuming that Pan-Serbian intrigues in fact menaced the integrity of the Dual Monarchy, Vienna was obviously right in regarding the crime of Serajevo as offering a favourable occasion for energetic action. The ultimatum sent to the Serbian government was in the main defensible as to its content. Its form, however, might well have been less provocative; and the Russian request that Serbia should not be required to answer within forty-eight hours might well have been granted. If the time-factor had

[1] Hofmann, vol. i., p. 124.

not been essential, a moderate extension of the term would have cost Austria nothing and would have exhibited regard for Russian susceptibilities and a spirit of conciliation. If Vienna had been less peremptory, it is probable that Belgrade would have been less compliant; for the less clearly Vienna showed its purpose to force a war, the less safely could Belgrade, for the sake of making war appear unjustifiable, offer sweeping concessions. Of promises that might be accepted it could less easily afford to be lavish. If Belgrade had been less compliant, Vienna could more plausibly have maintained that the Serbian assurances were unsatisfactory. From the outset Austria had formal ground for war in the alleged Serbian disregard of treaty engagements; and it was a mistake for Austria to discredit its cause by overhasty action. And Vienna should not have shown any such reluctance as it displayed from July 23 to July 29 to discuss its future relations to Serbia. From the outset not only should it have promised (as it did) to respect the integrity and independence of the Serbian kingdom; it should also have been ready to discuss the question how the Dual Monarchy could obtain security for Serbia's good behaviour without impairment of Serbia's independence. It should have been eager to converse

upon this theme, not only with St. Petersburg but with any European capital, at any time and to any extent desired. It is hardly possible to imagine a question more perfectly adapted to what Bismarck once described as "dilatory negotiations." In the meantime the Austrian campaign against Serbia could have been pushed vigorously, without let or hindrance, until the Russian government lost patience and mobilized. The mobilization of Russia's southern forces should then have been met (as it was met) by complete Austrian mobilization.

Complete Russian mobilization need not and should not have interrupted negotiations. The Austrian foreign minister in fact declared, on July 31, that he was ready to continue to negotiate, "despite the change in the situation which has resulted from Russia's mobilization." Much less should Russian mobilization have been met by a German declaration of war. It should have been met, if the game were to be played on Bismarckian lines, by a concentration of German troops on the eastern frontier and, if it was deemed necessary, by complete German mobilization. Then the German government could and should have waited for overt aggression or a declaration of war by Russia against Austria, as under similar

circumstances Bismarck waited in 1866 for aggression on the part of Austria. "Russia," as the German foreign secretary informed the British ambassador in Berlin, "had said that her mobilization did not necessarily imply war, and that she could perfectly well remain mobilized for months without making war. This," the secretary added, "was not the case with Germany." The reason why this was not the case with Germany he found in the time-factor; Germany, as he explained, "had the speed, and Russia had the numbers."[1] The chief reason, however, why the time-factor was of such importance was because the German plan of campaign demanded that the greater part of the German forces should be used on the western frontier in order to crush France.

It may well be doubted whether Russia would have remained mobilized for months, or even for weeks, without making war; for during these weeks or months Austria would have had free hand, not only in Serbia, but in the whole Balkan peninsula. Under the pressure of such a situation, Russia must soon have decided either to accept such assurances as Austria chose to give or to declare war. Which course would it have chosen? In the opinion of the German chancellor,

[1] British Blue Book, no. 138.

expressed in his speech of December 2, 1914, Russia would not have mobilized without assurance of French support. If that be true, it certainly would not have attacked Austria without such assurance.

Toward France Germany could and should have assumed a similar waiting attitude. Assurance could have been given that Germany would not attack Russia unless Russia attacked Austria. There need have been no concentration of German troops on the western frontier, unless France proceeded to mobilize. There, as on the eastern front, it would have been possible to follow the Bismarckian policy of keeping always one move behind the prospective enemy in visible military preparations.

What course would the French government have followed in such a situation? A distinguished French publicist, to whom I put this question in the spring of 1915, frankly stated that one could not say, one could only guess. The text of the Franco-Russian treaty of alliance has not been published; it is, however, probable, and it is generally assumed by European publicists, that this alliance is in its terms defensive.[1] If Russia

[1] Sir Edward Grey remarked to the Austrian ambassador in London, on July 24, "that the terms of the Franco-Russian Alliance might read about the same as those of the Triple Alliance"; and the Austrian ambassador thought it worth while to telegraph this hint to Vienna. Austro-Hungarian Red Book, no. 10.

had attacked Austria, France could doubtless have said that Austria had brought this attack upon itself by attacking Serbia and that Russia's action was in reality defensive. At the outset, however, the French government exhibited sympathy with the Austrian grievances against Serbia. On July 24 the French acting minister of foreign affairs assured the Austrian ambassador in Paris that "recent events and the attitude of the Serbian government made energetic action on Austria's side quite comprehensible." In his report of this conversation the ambassador added that the French minister "expressed the hope that the controversy would be adjusted peaceably and in a way corresponding to our wishes"; and that he "avoided any attempt to palliate or defend in any way the attitude of Serbia."[1] Had Russia attacked Austria while the latter was freely discussing its future relations to Serbia, it would have been open to the French government to say that Russia was the aggressor, that France had no vital interests in the Balkans, and that it was not bound to support Russia in aggressive action for the protection of purely Russian interests.

In the situation supposed, the attitude of France, like that of Italy and of England, would doubtless

[1] Austrian Red Book, no. 11.

have been determined partly by its interests and partly by public sentiment. There would have been a natural reluctance to leave an ally in the lurch, and this sentiment would have had material support among French holders of Russian securities. It would have been urged that refusal to support Russia in this war would deprive France of Russian support in the next war. There would have been a feeling that this was perhaps France's last chance to recover its lost provinces. Considering, however, the strength of anti-militarist (as well as anti-capitalist) feeling in France in 1914, and the degree to which regret for Alsace-Lorraine was ceasing to be a motive for action and becoming a sentimental tradition, it seems safe to say that if France had joined Russia in attacking the Central Empires, the French people would not have entered upon the war with anything approaching the unity of feeling with which they sprang to the defence of their country against the German attack.

Bethmann-Hollweg told the German Reichstag and the world, in his speech of December 2, 1914, that France would not have supported Russia without assurance of British support. We have seen that, in fact, the French ambassador at St. Petersburg told the Russian foreign

minister on July 24, "that France would fulfil all the obligations entailed by her alliance with Russia, if necessity arose," which meant that France would support Russia against a German attack; and that France received no assurance of British support until August 2, and then only the assurance that the British naval forces would protect the French coast and French shipping against a German naval attack.[1] If Russia had attacked Austria, it is at least uncertain what attitude France would have taken. If France had supported a Russian attack upon Austria by aggressive action against Germany, what would have been the attitude of Great Britain?

III

The British government, like the French, expressed sympathy with Austrian grievances, and the British diplomatists declared, distinctly and repeatedly, that England had no interest in the Balkans and that English public opinion would not support action in behalf of Serbia.[2] It was clearly indicated also, by Sir Edward Grey, that war between Austria and Russia would not pro-

[1] See above, pp. 51–54.

[2] British Blue Book, nos. 5, 6, 24, 25, 62; Austrian Red Book, nos. 10, 41.

voke British intervention unless Germany and France were involved.[1] Whatever understanding existed between the French and British governments, whatever obligations of honour had been assumed, the prospect of armed co-operation was expressly limited to defence against an unprovoked attack and was made conditional, so far as Great Britain was concerned, upon the approval of Parliament.[2] That approval was itself dependent upon public opinion.

That the British government took these reservations seriously is shown by the fact, revealed since the outbreak of the war, that in 1912 it assured the German government that no aggressive movement against Germany would receive any support from Great Britain. In that year negotiations were conducted between the two governments looking to a better understanding and to a limitation of naval expenditures. Alluding to these negotiations, Prime Minister Asquith said, in a speech at Cardiff, October 2, 1914:

> We laid down in the year 1912, in terms carefully approved by the cabinet, and which I will textually quote, what our relations with Germany ought, in

[1] British Blue Book, *passim;* especially nos. 87, 89.

[2] *Ibid.*, no. 105 and enclosures. Sir Edward Grey, speech in the House of Commons, August 3, 1914; *ibid.*, part 2, pp. 90, 91.

our view, to be. We said, and we communicated this to the German government:

"Britain declares that she will neither make nor join in any unprovoked attack upon Germany. Aggression upon Germany is not the subject and forms no part of any treaty, understanding or combination to which Britain is now a party, nor will she become a party to anything that has such an object."

There is nothing ambiguous or equivocal about that. But that was not enough for German statesmanship. They wanted us to go further. They asked us to pledge ourselves absolutely to neutrality in the event of Germany being engaged in war.

Alluding to the same negotiations, Sir Edward Grey said, in a speech in London, March 22, 1915:

In recent years we have given Germany every assurance that any aggressive movement upon her would receive no support from us. We withheld from her only one thing—the unconditional promise to stand aside, however aggressive Germany herself might be to her neighbours.

These statements were substantially confirmed by extracts from the correspondence of 1912 published by the German Foreign Office in July, 1915, and by the British Foreign Office, August 31, 1915. In the course of the negotiations, various formulas were suggested, but no agreement was attained, because the German diplomatists

found the British proposals inadequate, and the British diplomatists regarded the German proposals as ambiguous. The last German suggestion was that Great Britain should promise to remain neutral "if war were forced upon Germany." British reluctance to accept this formula was signally justified in 1914, when Germany, although it acted aggressively, claimed that war had been forced upon the Central Empires by Serbian provocation and Russian mobilization.

In the course of these negotiations, Sir Edward Grey indicated, very clearly and very frankly, the attitude which Great Britain might be expected to take in the event of war between Germany and France. He stated to the German ambassador in London that "if Germany desired to crush France, England might not be able to sit still; though if France were aggressive and attacked Germany, no support would be given by his majesty's government."

Except for the absence of formal treaty engagements, Great Britain's relations to France and to Germany were very like those which Germany maintained with Austria and with Russia in the last years of Bismarck's chancellorship. Germany was then bound to defend Austria against a Russian attack, but to remain neutral in case Austria

attacked Russia.[1] Similarly, in the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the war, Great Britain indicated that it would support France against German aggression, but would remain neutral if France attacked Germany. In the one case as in the other, this attitude made for the preservation of the peace of Europe.

Although no formal agreement was reached, the British assurances constituted, for German diplomacy, an asset of no mean value. At Berlin, it is probable that this asset was undervalued. Faithless men cannot trust their fellows; and statesmen who are ready to break treaties are not disposed to rely on one-sided promises. Both Asquith and Grey, however, have indicated that they regarded the British assurances to Germany as binding, in spite of the failure of the two powers to discover a formula on which they could agree. In the speech above cited, Asquith said:

> None the less, we have continued during the whole of the last two years, and never more energetically and more successfully than during the Balkan crisis of last year [1913], to work not only for the peace of Europe but also for the creation of a better international atmosphere and a more cordial co-operation between all the powers.

[1] See above, pp. 20–22.

Up to the very outbreak of the World War, indeed, the British government seems to have taken its pledge to Germany seriously, for from July 24 to August 1, 1914, it steadily refused to declare itself "solidary" with Russia and France or to promise France armed support. On July 31, Grey said to the German ambassador in London

> that if Germany could get any reasonable proposal put forward, which made it clear that Germany and Austria were striving to preserve European peace, and that Russia and France would be unreasonable if they rejected it, I would support it at St. Petersburg and Paris, and go the length of saying that, if Russia and France would not accept it, his majesty's government would have nothing more to do with the consequences; but, otherwise, I told the German ambassador that if France became involved we should be drawn in.

Grey telegraphed this report of his statement to the British ambassador at Berlin, and instructed him to communicate it to the German chancellor or to the German secretary of state.[1]

On the following day, in response to a personal appeal from the president of the French Republic, King George could promise nothing more than to "continue to discuss freely and frankly any

[1] British Blue Book, no. 111.

point which might arise of interest to our two nations."[1]

In President Poincaré's letter, as in previous appeals from Russia and France, it was urged that if Germany were convinced that Great Britain would give armed support to the cause of the Triple Entente, peace might be preserved; and some British and American writers have affirmed their belief that this was true. Considering, however, that the British government had promised to give no support to any aggressive action against Germany, and that up to August 1 it was uncertain whether Germany would attack Russia and France or await attack from these powers, it is obvious that the British government could not honourably give the desired assurances. Neither could it do—even if it can be conceived to have desired to do—what the German chancellor urged it to do and has since persisted that it should have done, namely, assure Russia and France that it would not support them; for, as the chancellor very well knew, and admitted to the British ambassador in Berlin on July 29, using almost the very words which Sir Edward Grey had addressed to the German ambassador in London two years before: "Great

[1] *Collected Diplomatic Documents*, pp. 542–544.

Britain would never stand by and allow France to be crushed."[1] Bound in honour to support France against an unprovoked attack from Germany, bound also in honour to take no part in an attack upon Germany, the British government could only await the action of the continental powers.

When the German chancellor began to try to find out on what conditions Great Britain would remain neutral, Grey replied, July 30, that "the one way of maintaining the good relations between England and Germany is that they should continue to work together to preserve the peace of Europe."[2] This way, however, was closed to the German government by its plan of campaign. Time spent in trying to preserve the peace of Europe would be time given to Germany's enemies. Further German attempts to ascertain on what conditions, other than that stated by Grey in 1912 and restated on July 30, 1914, it could assure itself of British neutrality seem inexplicable, unless they were dictated by that primitive form of diplomatic finesse which consists in asking questions for the sake of saying afterwards that they were asked.[3]

[1] British Blue Book, no. 85. [2] *Ibid.*, no. 101.

[3] On August 1, the German ambassador in London asked Sir Edward Grey whether, if Germany should promise not to

When, on August 1, Germany declared war on Russia because Russia refused to demobilize, Grey's hands were freed. The Entente had the law on its side; Germany had begun. On August 2, accordingly, he told the French ambassador that the British fleet would give all the protection in its power against any hostile operations of the German fleet. On the very next day he informed the House of Commons of his action. He was able to support it with all the weight of the imponderables. After reminding his hearers that the French fleet was concentrated in the Mediterranean, he said:

> My own feeling is that if a foreign fleet, engaged in *a war which France had not sought, and in which she had not been the aggressor*, came down the English Channel and bombarded and battered the undefended coasts of France, we could not stand aside

violate Belgian neutrality, England would bind itself to remain neutral. He also asked whether Grey could not formulate conditions on which England would remain neutral. He suggested that the integrity of France and its colonies might be guaranteed. See British Blue Book, no. 123. The Germans have attached much weight to this interview and have treated Grey's refusal to commit his government as an evidence of desire for war. They have treated the German ambassador's questions as if they had been German offers. They were, however, evidently "soundings," intended to elicit a British offer. See the ambassador's report to the German chancellor; *Collected Diplomatic Documents*, p. 541.

> . . . with our arms folded, looking on dispassionately, doing nothing. I believe that would be the feeling of the country.[1]

He also stated that, in reply to inquiries from the British government, France had promised to respect the neutrality of Belgium, but Germany had given no answer. He further informed the House that, on the previous evening, Germany had demanded unmolested passage for its troops through Belgium and that the Belgian government had refused the demand. On the following day (August 4), the British government presented its ultimatum, demanding that Germany respect the neutrality of Belgium. German troops, however, had already crossed the Belgian frontier.

If Germany had awaited attack from Russia and from France; if at the outset it had held itself on the defensive against France, alike with its navy (as it offered to do)[2] and with its land forces; if it had respected the neutrality of

[1] British Blue Book, part 2, p. 92.

[2] Bethmann-Hollweg, speech before committee of Reichstag, November 9, 1914:

"At the last moment I promised further that, so long as England remained neutral, our fleet would not attack the French northern coast, and on the condition of reciprocity would undertake no hostile operations against French merchant ships."

Luxemburg and of Belgium—on what ground could England have based a declaration of war? It is of course true that for centuries it has been England's policy to maintain the balance of power in Europe, and that it has repeatedly supported continental coalitions against any state that threatened to dominate the continent, particularly if that state was developing sea-power. It is arguable that if England had not supported France and Russia in the present war, no matter who began it, it would have lost a promising chance to check the growth of German sea-power and might, within a few years, have had to fight single-handed against a Germany flushed with victory and stronger than in 1914. It is on this *cui bono* line of reasoning that German writers base their assumption that the British government intended from the outset to support France, no matter what Germany did or refrained from doing. There is, however, no direct evidence that even tends to support this assumption. On the other hand, evidence has been accumulating, since the outbreak of the war, that if there was (as there well may have been) a war party in the cabinet, it was in a minority until August 2, and that even then there was no majority for full intervention, on land as well as at sea, until Germany

invaded Belgium. Is it indeed conceivable that the government in power in August, 1914, pledged to take no part in any aggressive movement against Germany, preoccupied with far-reaching plans of social reform, embarrassed by the prospect of civil war in Ireland, could have proposed a war to preserve the balance of power on land and to assure British predominance on the seas? We must not forget that, as the situation actually developed, and in spite of Germany's aggressive conduct, two members of the cabinet chose to resign rather than support intervention. And if, in the situation supposed, the cabinet had decided upon intervention, could it have obtained the support of the House of Commons? Would Home Rulers, Radicals, and Labour members, who constituted so large a part of its following, have agreed that the measures which they had most at heart should be shelved during the continuance of such a war? Would it not have occurred to them that these measures might be held up for years afterward, on the ground that the burden of an enormous war debt made it financially impossible to put them into operation? Would they not have seen, in the suggestion of such a war, the stale device of conservative statecraft:

> To busy giddy minds
> With foreign quarrels; that action, hence borne out,
> May waste the memory of the former days?[1]

Had Germany pursued the course above outlined, it seems certain that it could have counted upon British neutrality, at least until Russia had been forced to come to terms and France was in danger of being crushed. Under any conceivable circumstances, it would have been difficult to solidify British opinion at a later period as it was solidified at the outset by the aggressive action of Germany; and if Great Britain had intervened later, it would have acted half-heartedly. Its forces would probably have been limited, so far as warfare on land was concerned, to its regular troops, supported by a relatively small volunteer army. The Empire could hardly have gathered the millions of men who are now fighting in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia. Conscription would have been unthinkable.

If the foregoing conclusions are sound, it is clear that the British Foreign Office was justified in pursuing, during the critical days that preceded the outbreak of war, the line of action, or rather of inaction, which has aroused the most persistent criticism, namely, in refusing to give to the French

[1] *King Henry IV.*, second part, act iv., scene 5.

government prompter assurance of armed support against Germany and in failing to address to the German government any definite threat of armed opposition. It was indeed impossible for the British government to act otherwise. Had it given the desired assurances, not only might it thereby have precipitated the general war it was striving to avert, but it might also have created a situation in which it would have been unable to redeem its promises. It might have so encouraged the war party at St. Petersburg as to induce, on the part of Russia, aggressive action, or action that could plausibly be represented as aggressive. If, at the outbreak of the war, it had appeared doubtful whether the Central Empires or the Entente Allies were the aggressors, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the British government to secure support in Parliament or in the country for a policy of armed intervention against Germany.

To have addressed to the German government a definite threat of intervention would have been tantamount to giving to France and to Russia a definite assurance of support. The relations between Great Britain and the Entente Allies required at least diplomatic co-operation; and such co-operation involves at the very least that

each of the co-operating powers be informed of all important steps taken by the others. If we imagine, however, that for the sake of preserving the peace of Europe the British government had attempted to exercise a secret pressure on Berlin, that it had addressed to the German government a definite threat, without communicating information of this action to Russia or even to France, it is not improbable that the German Foreign Office would itself have revealed the threat, directly or indirectly, to the Russian diplomatists. German statesmen would probably have realized —Bismarck would certainly have realized—as promptly as Sir Edward Grey that such knowledge might spur Russia into overt aggression. They had the British promise of 1912 that Great Britain would take no part in any aggressive action against Germany; and, if they could have tempted Russia into an attack, the publication of this promise would at least have divided British sentiment and would thus have insured British neutrality. The British government would then have been left in the humiliating position of having made a threat which it could not support by action.

The line of action suggested by those who maintain that a more resolute British policy would

have averted the war is one that might conceivably have been taken by a government that could disregard its pledges and manufacture whatever public opinion it needed, but not by a faith-keeping government that was dependent in last resort on a public opinion which it could not control.

Incidentally it may be noted that the failure of the German government to cite the British promise of neutrality when Great Britain declared war against Germany, the silence of Berlin regarding the negotiations of 1912 until these had been discussed by Asquith and by Grey, indicates that German statesmen did not really think that Russian mobilization was to be regarded as a hostile act. Their silence at least indicates that they thought such a theory better adapted for home consumption than for the international market. They expressed surprise and indignation at Great Britain's action; but they did not seek to justify their wrath by alleging any British breach of faith. The British promise of 1912 was made under a condition, and the German failure to cite the promise was tantamount to a confession that the condition had not been fulfilled, that Germany had not been attacked.

Had Great Britain remained neutral, it is obvious that Japan could not have gone into the

war, as it did, as Britain's ally, and it seems improbable that it would have attacked Germany without the assurance of British support. With Great Britain neutral and German warships at large, the reduction of Germany's East-Asiatic stronghold would have been a more difficult enterprise. An attack upon Russia would have been safer and might have been equally lucrative. At the end of July, 1914, when the British attitude was still uncertain, there were voices in Tokio, heard gladly and quoted promptly in Berlin, asserting that a Russian-German war would give Japan a favourable opportunity to extend its sphere of influence in Manchuria. The adoption of such a policy, however, would have involved the repudiation of the engagements that Japan had assumed toward Russia in the conventions of July 30, 1907, and of July 4, 1910. If any well-informed Germans expected Japan to ally itself with them in their attack upon Russia, they must have assumed that the Japanese attitude toward treaty engagements was the same as theirs.

Italy would of course have declared itself neutral, even if Russia had attacked Austria (assuming always that Austria had first attacked Serbia); but whether Italy would have denounced

its treaty with Austria and would have joined the opposing coalition is at least doubtful. Apart from the influence of the imponderables upon public sentiment, very material considerations would have tended to keep Italy out of the war. With Great Britain neutral and the German fleet at large, the naval situation in the Mediterranean would have been quite different. Even if the French and Italian naval forces were deemed equal to those of the Central Empires, Italy's long coast line could not have been effectively protected without British aid.

It seems probable, then, that if Austria and Germany had followed the Bismarckian tradition, waiting for Russia and France to attack them, and if, in the event of such an attack on both fronts, they had conducted their military campaign on the lines suggested by the elder Moltke and approved by Bismarck, defensively in the West, offensively in the East, not only Great Britain but also Italy and Japan would have remained neutral.

IV

Under such conditions it is obvious that Germany's position in the world, outside of Europe,

would have been much better than it is. With its navy at large, its merchant marine could not have been swept from the seas, nor could its colonies have been conquered.

What would have been its position in Europe? On this point one need not be a military expert to risk an opinion: even the civilian may draw conclusions from the record of the first year's fighting. Covered by the neutrality of Luxemburg and of Belgium, attacked by France only on the frontier which Moltke deemed amply protected, can it be doubted that Germany could have held the French in check with the lesser part of its forces? During its great drive in the East, in 1915, it was able to hold not only the French but also the Belgians and the British practically immobile on a far longer line than that of the German-French frontier.

It was of course claimed by the German government at the outbreak of the war that Germany's western front was not in fact covered by the neutrality of Belgium. In its ultimatum to Belgium it stated that it had "reliable information" that the French government intended to send troops through Belgian territory against Germany. Not only, however, has Germany thus far failed to show that such apprehensions were justified, but

the French government's formal promise to respect Belgian neutrality and the manner in which the French forces were concentrated at the outbreak of the war fully prove that Germany's information was not reliable.[1] And, except in Germany, it is obvious to everyone that if France had sent its troops through Belgium to attack Germany, not only would France have had no support from Great Britain in such an enterprise, but if in the progress of the war the French troops had been thrown back into their own territory and France had been threatened with overwhelming defeat, its chances of securing British aid would have been seriously impaired. British public opinion would not readily have pardoned a violation of Belgian neutrality by either of the belligerents.

The success of the German-Austrian campaign against Russia during the summer and early autumn of 1915, after Russia had had a year's time in which "to bring up masses of troops from all parts of its wide dominions," justifies us in believing that similar results could have been achieved, under the elder Moltke's plan of campaign, in the autumn of 1914. It seems improbable that Russian troops could have set foot in East Prussia, and, if the Germans had given the

[1] See above, p. 64.

Austrians at the outset the same support they gave later, Russia would hardly have been able to overrun Galicia or to threaten Hungary. Protected by the German offensive against Russian invasion, Austria could have completed its conquest of Serbia. In the Balkans the Central Empires could apparently have done about what they pleased, even without armed assistance from Turkey. "In politics," as Bismarck said, "it is never possible to give mathematical proofs"; but it seems highly probable that, by following the lines of diplomatic and military action above indicated, the Central Empires could have secured, before the winter of 1914–15, with a much less serious expenditure of blood and treasure, a stronger position in eastern Europe than they held at the close of the first year of warfare.

In the West, indeed, Germany's military position would have been less satisfactory. It would not have been in possession of the territory and industrial resources of Belgium and of north-eastern France. This advantage, however, was seriously lessened, if not outweighed, by the fact that the industrial resources of Great Britain, of Japan, and of the United States were thrown, to a far greater extent than would have been possible but for Germany's own course of action, upon the side

of the hostile coalition. Had Japan as well as England remained neutral, Russia and France could still have drawn military supplies from these countries and from the United States; but the manufacture of such supplies would have been left, in England and Japan as in the United States, to private enterprise, and the shipment of contraband to Germany's enemies would have been largely checked by the German navy. Its regular war vessels and its auxiliary cruisers could have controlled this traffic without the aid of its submarines —and without the international complications which resulted from the employment of submarines against neutral as well as belligerent merchant vessels.

If it be assumed that the avowed political aims of Germany were its only aims—that it attacked Russia only because the vital interests, if not the very existence, of Austria-Hungary were menaced by Russian ambition and Pan-Slavic aspirations, and that it attacked France only because France was certain to act with Russia—it is difficult to account for the rejection of the elder Moltke's plan of campaign. If, however, it be assumed that the decision of the German government was determined by political aims other than those which it avowed, the choice of

the western frontier for aggressive action becomes explicable. A vigorous offensive against Russia, at the opening of the war, might well have dissipated the Slav peril and gained for Austria a dominant position in the Balkans. What reward however, would victory in a war so conducted have brought to Germany? Austrian control of the Balkans would indeed have been of advantage to the German people; it would have facilitated the penetration, not of the Balkan peninsula only but also of Asia, by German trade, industry, and capital. Could these advantages, however, be regarded, from the military-political point of view, as a sufficient recompense for Germany's expenditure of money and of men, or as an adequate prize of victory? If not, what other prizes were in sight? The annexation of Russian territory could not be viewed as an unmixed advantage; Prussia has trouble enough with its present Polish population. In the West, however, are territories that Germany may well covet. The German ultimatum to Belgium contained a distinct threat of annexation. In its last effort to avert British intervention, the German Foreign Office indeed pointed out that Germany "could not profitably annex Belgian territory without making at the same time terri-

torial acquisitions at the expense of Holland," and that Germany had solemnly pledged its word to Holland "strictly to respect its neutrality."[1] If, however, Belgium were annexed, would it be possible for Holland long to remain outside the German Customs Union? And would not that Union be for Holland, as it was for all the lesser German states, the halfway house on the road to political union? With such prospects in view, could not Germany "profitably annex Belgian territory," as well as some of the adjacent French districts which were sure to fall into its hands if it opened the war with a prompt offensive in the West?

The western plan of campaign may have been preferred for many reasons, military, economic, and political. To many, perhaps to most, of the German military authorities it seemed self-evident that they must first attack and crush their most dangerous antagonist. It was from this point of view that it was declared to be "necessary" to overrun Belgium; the road through Belgium was "the quickest and easiest way into France." There were also reasons of military economy. The control of the coal and iron fields of Belgium and of north-eastern France would

[1] British Blue Book, no. 157.

be of supreme value to German war industries, and the loss of these sources of supply would inflict a corresponding injury upon Germany's enemies. Economic and political reasons were found in the prospect of maintaining permanent control of these territories. The addition of their mineral resources to those that Germany already possessed would give German manufacturers a practical monopoly of the continental iron and steel business. Finally, if these territories, or a considerable part of them, could be kept in Germany's hands until the close of the war, their possession would be a valuable asset in the negotiations for peace. Even if annexation should prove impracticable, Germany would have something to offer in return for concessions elsewhere.

What was the relative influence of these various considerations in determining the choice of the western plan of campaign we do not yet know. It is possible that the future historian will not know. Motives seldom appear in state archives. If they are found in memoirs, it may always be questioned whether the views of the writer were personal or general. In such matters the historian must depend largely on more or less obvious inferences. He will assuredly attach no little

weight to the demands for annexations that were formulated by German publicists, economists, and military writers before the war, were accepted early in the war by nearly all German political parties, and were supported during the first two years of the war by the almost unanimous voice of the German press. These cynically frank avowals of German land hunger may convince him that the war was pre-eminently what the German emperor was prompt to declare it was not—too prompt, perhaps, since his denial anticipated accusation—a war of conquest.

If the Central Empires fail to win victories so decisive as to make western annexations possible, the future historian may say that it was, from the military point of view, a mistake to try to conquer south-eastern and north-western territory in a single war; and that the political calculations which seem to have determined the plan of campaign were wrong, because due weight was not attached to the imponderables.

The German Theory of Warfare

And the Results of its Application

THE GERMAN THEORY OF WARFARE

AND THE RESULTS OF ITS APPLICATION

I

In the present war the Germans have disregarded humane instincts and international customs and rules to a degree that is unparalleled in modern warfare between civilized states. In most cases their action either is admitted and defended or is notorious and undisputed. In some cases neutrals have hesitated to credit the charges brought against the Germans. In so far as these charges rest on hostile testimony, collected and published by Germany's enemies, they are received with a certain skepticism, no matter how respectable the witnesses, how high the character of those who have sifted and presented the evidence. Even in such hostile evidence, however, there is in many instances an internal guaranty of accuracy. Among the documents published by the Belgian government, for example, are remonstrances

framed by Belgian civil or ecclesiastical authorities or by local bar associations and addressed to the German governor-general. Statements made in such documents can hardly be questioned, since it is not to be assumed that the remonstrants would weaken their case by including allegations which the German authorities could dispute.

Evidence of the highest value, obviously, is that which comes from German sources. Besides acts admitted and defended, there are acts proved by German proclamations posted in occupied territories, by diaries and letters found on slain or captured German soldiers, and by letters and articles written at the front and published in German newspapers. Not a little evidence of this sort has been published in England and in France, with photographic facsimiles.[1]

Undisputed, notorious, or amply proven are the following charges.

In land warfare Germany has employed poisonous gases and liquid fire. It has bombarded from aircraft places undefended and containing no constructions of military importance. In several in-

[1] Among such collections are: *Scraps of Paper: German Proclamations in Belgium and France* (London, 1916); Joseph Bédier, *Les crimes allemands d'après des temoignages allemands* (Paris, 1915), and *Comment l'Allemagne essaie de justifier ses crimes* (Paris, 1916).

stances, according to German testimony, German officers have used civilian enemies as fire-screens. In several instances, on the same testimony, German troops have been instructed to give no quarter, not even to wounded enemies.

In sea warfare Germany has employed submarines not only against war vessels but also, and far more extensively, against merchantmen, and not only against enemy ships but against those of neutrals. It has sunk hospital ships, on the plea—denied and unproven—that such ships have been used to carry soldiers and munitions of war.

In Belgium and in other occupied territories the German authorities have subjected the civil population to a reign of terror unexampled in modern war. They have repressed "sniping," the destruction of railroads and of telegraphs, and other hostile acts, by burning villages and towns and by shooting the inhabitants at random; that is, by indiscriminate punishment of possible offenders, whose responsibility was not established, and of much larger numbers of men, women, and children who were undoubtedly innocent. To prevent such disturbance of their military operations and to ensure order, they have seized civilian hostages, to be shot if any hostile act or transgression of military regulations should occur in the locality.

The German army has secured from civilian enemies services of direct or indirect military value, not only by threats and by imprisonment, but also by depriving them of food. Finally, Germany has deported at least a quarter of a million Belgian and French men and women to German factories and to labour camps, where they are subjected to similar if not greater duress. General von Bissing claimed that many Belgian workmen "voluntarily" signed labour contracts; but he admitted that those who refused to sign were nevertheless deported and received a lower rate of pay.

Where civilian rights to liberty and life are systematically disregarded, violations of private property rights seem relatively venial offences. These, however, have been frequent and flagrant. The districts occupied by German troops have suffered not a little from irresponsible private looting and destruction. They have suffered much more from wholesale official looting in the form of excessive requisitions, indemnities, and contributions. In some instances not only the local authorities but also prominent citizens have been made responsible for prompt payment; in other instances the levy has been secured by house-to-house search and distraint of goods. In their

retirement from portions of French territory, not only have the Germans destroyed everything that could be of use to the armed hostile forces pursuing them, but they have also endeavoured to destroy everything that could be of use to the civil population.[1]

Official pleas of justification for those acts which are admitted fall into two classes. Either they invoke "necessity" or they allege prior breaches of law by Germany's enemies which have forced the German government to exercise the right of retaliation. Each of these pleas implies a recognition that the German actions were at least irregular. In view of this attitude, it is pertinent to show that for nearly a century German military writers have specifically recognized many of these acts as regular and normal incidents of war, and have developed general theories of warfare which justify all the others.[2]

[1] For a vivid picture of this devastation, see extracts from a letter found on a captured German soldier, cited by Philip Gibbs in a dispatch published in the *New York Times*, April 18, 1917.

[2] The German military writings cited in the following pages are: Gen. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (1832), translated by Col. F. N. Maude (3 vols., 1911); Gen. Julius von Hartmann, *Militärische Notwendigkeit und Humanität*, in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, vols. xiii., xiv. (1877–1878); *The German War Book*, published under the auspices of the German General Staff, translated by J. H. Morgan (1915).

II

Terrorism, defended in the present war largely on the ground of atrocities alleged (but not proved) to have been committed by civilians, was advocated by General von Hartmann, forty years ago:

> Terror seems relatively the milder method of holding in subjection masses of people who have been thrown out of the normal and regular conditions of peace. . . . If individuals suffer for the sake of a warning example, their fate is deeply to be lamented; but for the whole body of people the severity exercised against these individuals operates wholesomely and is a benefit. . . .
>
> Bluntschli, Jacquemyns and others . . . object to imposing upon towns in which offences have been committed fines which exceed the amount of damage that has been done; they condemn the burning of villages from which civilians have attacked troops; they refuse their assent to the taking of hostages, whose arrest is to prevent illegal acts on the part of the population. . . . Military realism, in listening to such utterances, silently shrugs its shoulders.[1]

Hartmann also justifies the harshest measures needed to secure services from civilian enemies, even services of military value:

> When the law of peace is supplanted by the law of war . . . it does not abandon its claim to con-

[1] *Loc. cit.*, vol. xiii., p. 462.

tinued authority. All paragraphs of the domestic code threatening punishment for treason remain in force; only extreme duress imposed by the invader can protect the inhabitants, in case these render services to the invading army, against subsequent accountability to their own courts in case of a change in the fortunes of war or after the conclusion of peace. Here the one threat of punishment has to overbid the other; the invading army cannot dispense with the services of the inhabitants; it is obliged to demand them, it needs them at every step. These services can be secured only through fear of severer and more certain punishment than that threatened by the domestic law. In such cases interest and fear must silence patriotism and the sense of right in the hostile population. This is certainly far from moral, but it is a military necessity and the inevitable result of military invasion.[1]

Similarly the *War Book:*

The summoning of the inhabitants to supply vehicles and perform works has also been stigmatized as an unjustifiable compulsion upon the inhabitants to participate in "military operations." But it is clear that an officer can never allow such a far-reaching extension of this conception. . . . The argument of war must decide.

Therefore the conduct of the German civil commissioner, Count Renard—so strongly condemned by . . . jurists with French sympathies—who [in 1870], in order to compel labour for the necessary repair of a bridge, threatened . . . to punish the

[1] *Loc. cit.*, vol. xiii., p. 464.

workers by shooting some of them, was in accordance with the actual laws of war. . . .[1]

The *War Book* follows Hartmann in justifying the taking of hostages—a policy adopted by Germany, but more sparingly practised, in 1870.

A new application of "hostage right" was practised by the German Staff in the War of 1870, when it compelled leading citizens from French towns and villages to accompany trains and locomotives in order to protect the railway communications which were threatened by the people. Since the lives of peaceable inhabitants were without any fault on their part thereby exposed to grave danger, every writer outside Germany has stigmatized this measure as contrary to the law of nations and as unjustified towards the inhabitants of the country. As against this unfavourable criticism it must be pointed out that this measure, which was also recognized on the German side as harsh and cruel, was only resorted to after declarations and instructions of the occupying authorities had proved ineffective, and that in the particular circumstance it was the only method which promised to be effective. . . .[2]

As regards requisitions, German military writers take a position which justifies both terrorism and unlimited spoliation. Clausewitz writes:

The due execution of . . . requisitions is enforced by detachments placed under the orders of

[1] *The German War Book*, p. 118. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 119–120.

the official functionaries, but still more by the fear of responsibility, punishment, and ill-treatment, which in such cases presses on the whole population like a general weight.

This resource has no limits except those of the exhaustion, impoverishment, and devastation of the country. . . .[1]

And in the light of experience he suggests to his successors:

Whatever method of providing subsistence may be chosen, it is but natural that it would be more easily carried out in rich and well-peopled countries, than in the midst of a poor and scanty population. . . . There is infinitely less difficulty in supporting an army in Flanders than in Poland.[2]

The *War Book* brushes away all limitations of international law and custom in this matter:

Article 40 of the Declaration of Brussels requires that the requisitions (being written out) shall bear a direct relation to the capacity and resources of a country; and, indeed, the justification for this condition would be willingly recognized by everyone in theory, but it will scarcely ever be observed in practice. In cases of necessity the needs of the army will alone decide. . . .[3]

Hartmann had already taken the broadest point of view:

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii., pp. 97–98. [2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 103. [3] P. 134.

> The system of requisitions goes far beyond the taking of means of subsistence from the country in which war is being conducted; it includes the entire exploitation of that country. . . . This implies that military necessity can make no distinction between public and private property, that it is entitled to take what it needs, wherever and however it can. . . . The fundamental principle of all warfare must not be ignored; the hostile state is not to be spared the suffering and privations of warfare; these are particularly adapted to break its energy and to coerce its will. . . . The state at war must spare its own means for conducting war and must injure and destroy those of the enemy.[1]

And still earlier Clausewitz had written:

> . . . Invasion . . . is the occupation of the enemy's territory, not with a view to keeping it, but in order to levy contributions upon it or to devastate it. The immediate object here is neither the conquest of the enemy's territory nor the defeat of his armed force, but merely to do him damage in a general way.[2]

Devastation of enemy territory which the invader is forced to abandon is regarded by both writers as necessary and therefore normal. Clausewitz writes, with a certain artistic appreciation of good professional work:

[1] Hartmann, *loc. cit.*, vol. xiii., pp. 458, 459.
[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 33.

All that the country yields will be taken for the benefit of the retreating army first, and will be mostly consumed. Nothing remains but wasted villages and towns, fields from which the crops have been gathered or which are trampled down, empty wells and muddy brooks.[1]

And Hartmann follows him:

. . . The offensive of an invading army has failed; it is executing a rapid retreat in order to gain, in the rear, a new position, reinforcements and fresh military supplies. In such a case the destruction, indeed the devastation of the abandoned territory becomes a military duty of self-preservation. . . . To distinguish in such a case between public property and private property would be disastrous.[2]

III

The foregoing utterances are corollaries of a broader theory. In German military philosophy, war is normally and properly a struggle, not solely between the armed forces of the contending states, nor solely between their governments, but also between their populations. The contrary theory, that war is a contest between the armed forces of the belligerent states, is a temporary aberration. It is comparatively modern, and it is already antiquated. It took form, according to Clause-

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 326. [2] *Loc. cit.*, vol. xiii., p. 460.

witz, in the time of Louis XIV, when the universal military service of primitive peoples and of early states had been replaced by the hired services of professional soldiers. With the reappearance of universal military duty, with the substitution of great popular armies for small mercenary armies, war has reverted to what Clausewitz terms "its real nature" and "its absolute perfection."[1] The sustenance of these popular armies, as he already perceived, had made victory more largely than before a question of economic resources, and war more largely a struggle between the belligerent nations as economic organizations. Since his time, with the rapid development of the natural sciences and the mechanical arts, new and enormously costly instruments and munitions of war have been devised; and, in order to secure an adequate provision of the means of war, all the material resources, all the brains and all the labour power available in the warring nations are drawn into some sort of war service. It seems a logical inference that many if not all distinctions formerly drawn between combatants and non-combatants and between public and private property have lost their justification. In modern war every member of a nation, without regard to age and

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. iii., pp. 94–102.

sex, is at least a potential combatant, and all property is potentially state property. This is the theory of the *War Book:*

> A war conducted with energy cannot be directed merely against the combatants of the enemy state and the positions they occupy, but it will and must in like manner seek to destroy the total spiritual and material resources of the latter. . . .[1]

With war thus widened—or thus restored to "its absolute perfection"—the interests at stake, ideal and material alike, are vastly greater and more general. Defeat in the dynastic wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries meant chiefly loss of princely power and prestige. Defeat in a modern national war means not only national humiliation but possible national ruin. Besides defraying the enormous cost of the war, the defeated nation may be compelled to pay a crushing indemnity. If it cannot pay at once, it may be forced to pay gradually. In the present war, as soon as the German hope of a speedy triumph was dissipated, German writers pointed out that the districts occupied by their armies, if not annexed, could be held until they were ransomed. A distinguished economist, Professor Schumacher, indicated that Germany's defeated enemies might

[1] P. 52.

be forced to accept commercial treaties and to submit to tariff discriminations that would enrich Germany at their expense.[1] Here again we have a reversion to primitive warfare. Defeat of a tribe meant the destruction or enslavement of all its members. Defeat of a nation today may mean an indefinite period of economic servitude.

It may be added that, in a war for naval supremacy, it is widely believed that victory may give control of the markets of the world and that defeat may mean practical exclusion from oversea trade.

With such ideal and material issues at stake, a modern nation at war will inevitably develop a "will to victory" as intense as that of a savage tribe, and will care little more than a savage tribe how victory is won. What degree of regard can be expected for sentiments of humanity, or for a formal law that is substantially antiquated? The nation must win—honourably, if it can, but in any case it must win.

> War [Clausewitz writes] is an act of violence intended to compel our enemy to fulfil our will. . . . In such dangerous things as war, the errors which proceed from a spirit of benevolence are the worst. . . . He who uses force unsparingly . . . must

[1] Hermann Schumacher, *Meistbegünstigungen und Zollunterscheidung* (1915).

obtain a superiority if his adversary uses less vigour in its application. . . . To introduce into the philosophy of war itself a principle of moderation would be an absurdity.[1]

Military action [Hartmann writes] must be determined solely in accordance with those conditions which usually prevail in war; in this sense its procedure is completely ruthless. For the individual soldier, murder and ill-treatment, robbery and pillage are crimes and offences whether committed in war or in peace. It goes without saying that in actual warfare it is hardly ever possible to draw a sharp line between these two courses of action on the part of the fighting forces. . . .

It would be yielding to voluntary self-deception not to recognize that at the present time war must be conducted much more ruthlessly and much more violently, and that it must come much nearer to affecting the entire population, than has previously been the case. . . .[2]

Following these authorities, the *War Book* seeks to instil the proper spirit into German officers:

. . . Since the tendency of thought of the last century was dominated essentially by humanitarian considerations, which not infrequently degenerated into sentimentality and flabby emotionalism, there have not been wanting attempts to influence the development of the usages of war in a way which was

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. i., pp. 2, 3.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, vol. xiii., pp. 116, 117; vol. xiv., p. 90.

in fundamental contradiction with the nature of war and its object.

By steeping himself in military history, an officer will be able to guard himself against excessive humanitarian notions. It will teach him that certain severities are indispensable to war, nay more, that the only true humanity very often lies in a ruthless application of them.[1]

Of the traditional and conventional rules of war German military writers speak with unveiled contempt. Clausewitz writes:

Violence arms itself with the inventions of art and science in order to contend against violence. Self-imposed restrictions, almost imperceptible and hardly worth mentioning, termed usages of international law, accompany it without essentially impairing its power.[2]

Hartmann discusses, at some length, the relation between military necessity and the laws of war. Among other things he says:

Rights which the War Power has to respect can exist only in so far as they are expressly conceded, recognized, or maintained by that power. . . . If the War Power admits duties, it imposes them upon itself by virtue of its own supremacy; it does not regard them as imposed upon itself by any external authority. . . . In this matter . . . states cannot permit themselves to be guided by

[1] *The German War Book*, pp. 54, 55. [2] *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 2.

general principles of law. They must necessarily omit from any rules that they adopt everything that may possibly check or impair the freedom and effectiveness of military action. . . .

Unconditioned freedom of military action in war is an indispensable condition of military success. This is the principle which must be invoked from a military point of view against every effort to fetter action by an international law of war. . . .

Utterances of approved legal authorities and precedents found in international settlements can hardly claim full authority in the law of war, . . . because military situations necessarily vary, and military problems are therefore subjected to personal judgment, which can recognize no other law than that of military necessity.[1]

Whether any military action is commendable or reprehensible depends, not upon custom or convention, but upon its probable efficacy.

Suffering and injury inflicted upon the enemy [Hartmann writes] are the indispensable methods of bending and breaking his will. . . . Military action can be regarded as barbarous and worthy of condemnation only when it is taken without any such purpose, or when it is out of all proportion to the purpose to be achieved.[2]

The "argument of war" [the *War Book* explains] permits every belligerent state to have recourse to

[1] *Loc. cit.*, vol. xiii., p. 124; vol. xiv., pp. 89, 91.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 123.

all means which enable it to attain the object of the war. . . .

What is permissible includes every means of war without which the object of the war cannot be obtained; what is reprehensible, on the other hand, includes every act of violence and destruction which is not demanded by the object of the war.[1]

The ultimate test of right and wrong conduct, therefore, is to be found in its military outcome. Is this pragmatic test to be applied to the commanding officer who violates a law or custom of civilized warfare? Is he to be disavowed and cashiered if his action does not prove successful? Certainly not, for this would lame initiative.

It is quite immaterial [says Hartmann] whether the anticipated effect can actually be attained: the question is only whether the person responsible for the action was entitled to expect a successful result.[2]

This dictum enables us to grasp the full meaning of a pregnant sentence in the *War Book*—the very next sentence after that last cited:

It follows from these universally valid principles that wide limits are given to the subjective freedom and arbitrary judgment of the commanding officer.

[1] *The German War Book*, pp. 52, 64.
[2] *Loc. cit.*, vol. xiii., p. 123.

In plain English, the officer in command may disregard the laws and customs of war whenever he deems it expedient.

IV

The German theory of warfare is undeniably logical and consistent. The only question is whether all the factors that enter into the problem have received adequate consideration. It is not easy to pack the whole truth into syllogisms.

We note, first, that natural human feelings, the instinctive reactions of sentiment and of conscience, are considered only as personal emotions which the military officer must repress because they tend to impair his efficiency. We note, next, that these reactions appear to be deemed important only in the case of commissioned officers. It is conceivable, however, that they may have some effect upon the morale of non-commissioned officers and of privates, particularly in a popular army, and that a nation in arms may fight better with a good conscience than with a bad one. In speaking of the moral advantage of the defensive position at the outbreak of a war, Bismarck, who could hardly be accused of "flabby emotionalism," asserted that a German war of aggression "will

not have behind it the same dash and fire as a war in which we are attacked." If this is true, is it not also true that a wholly ruthless conduct of war may in some degree diminish the dash and fire of the troops? In the diaries and letters of German soldiers we see that some at least have felt qualms. In one case where, because of alleged sniping, "eight houses were destroyed with their inmates," and "out of one house alone two men with their wives and an eighteen-year-old girl were bayoneted," the diarist writes: "The girl made me feel bad, she gave such an innocent look."[1] After describing the looting and destruction of workingmen's houses, another diarist writes: "Atrocious! After all there is something in what is said about German barbarians."[2] And in the letter cited by Philip Gibbs, describing the devastation of a district abandoned by the German troops, the writer says: "We can scarcely be looked upon as soldiers; when we are at the front it is as if we were the greatest criminals."[3]

This point, of course, is not to be overstressed.

[1] Bédier, *Comment l'Allemagne essaie de justifier ses crimes*, pp. 15–17.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[3] *New York Times*, April 18, 1917.

In connection with the saying cited above, Bismarck also said that even an aggressive war would be waged "energetically and perhaps victoriously, when the soldiers have once come under fire and seen blood." Most of the German soldier diarists seem to have reconciled themselves to every form of brutality. Few show enjoyment of atrocities, but nearly all accept ruthlessness as necessary. "The women were a sight," one of them writes, and adds: "but there is no other way."[1] At the same time, the spiritual revolt of the finer natures cannot be regarded as a wholly negligible factor, even as regards the successful prosecution of a war.

Of the effect of ruthless warfare upon the minds of their adversaries German military writers have much to say. They recognize, however, but one possible effect. Merciless conduct of war will break the energy and coerce the will of an enemy nation. It will shake the morale of the combatants and will make the oppressed civil population clamorous for peace. That breaches of the laws and customs of war and acts of unusual inhumanity may have the opposite result; that these may steel the will and increase the energy of the hostile nation; that soldiers may

[1] Bédier, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

meet "dirty fighting" with double fury, and that oppressed civilians may protest against any peace that does not bring redress for wrongs endured and afford some security against like injuries in the future—all this is left out of the German calculations. Even military writers must know what everyone knows, that in time of peace nothing so spurs men to resistance as a sense of wrong; but they seem to assume that this reaction will not take place in war.

Of neutral reactions to cruelty and lawlessness German military writers say nothing. What is, on the whole, most significant is that they speak of all restrictions upon the "War Power" as "self-imposed." They refuse to recognize the laws and customs of war as imposed by "any external authority." In this they follow the theory accepted by the majority of German writers on politics and on jurisprudence. These hold that international law binds a state only in so far as the state consents to be bound by it.[1]

The reason why the Germans, and those who accept the German theory, can not see that the rules of international law are imposed upon the single state by the society of states, is because this society is not politically organized and has

[1] See below, p. 219.

no machinery for the enforcement of its rules. A powerful state may therefore, with apparent impunity, set these rules aside and take such action as its peculiar immediate interests seem to require. A weak state, indeed, can not do this; but the Germans courageously extricate themselves from this logical difficulty by denying that weak states are really states. They call such states "tolerated communities."

The fallacy of the German reasoning lies in the assumption that a society can not act upon its members otherwise than through political organization. They forget that even in politically organized societies men are coerced through other than political agencies and by other than political methods; for example, by ostracism. They ignore the fact that societies wholly destitute of political organization may extemporize economic and even physical coercion, by boycotting or "running out" or lynching those who disregard the interests and the sentiments of the group. To say that the restrictions which the society of civilized nations has developed by custom or by convention are "self-imposed" upon each state, is as if one should say that in a frontier mining camp, into which no sheriff has yet made his way, the custom that prohibits "claim-jumping" is

imposed upon each prospector by himself, not by the group in which he is living.

In treating international law as negligible; in ignoring the opinions, the sentiments, and the conscience of neutral nations, which express material and spiritual interests that are superior to the selfish interests of any single state and are the reservoir from which new international law is steadily drawn—the German theory of warfare leaves out of its calculations no less a factor than the World. The nation at war is to proceed as if it and its antagonist were fighting on Mars. What is more, it is to proceed as if, after the war, it were not obliged to come back into the World—the normal world of peace.

From one point of view, of course, neutral nations must be included in military calculations. They also may migrate to Mars. To avert their hostility, to secure if possible their support, is of no slight importance; but this is the business not of the General Staff but of the Foreign Office. It seems, however, to be the general belief of military men that the action or inaction of neutrals will be determined chiefly, if not wholly, by the progress of the war. A neutral nation will presumably wish to be on the winning side. It will certainly avoid entanglement with belliger-

ents who seem to be losing. These considerations enhance the importance of rapid victory and reinforce the demand for ruthless warfare.

V

The political authorities of a state, unless their minds are hopelessly militarized, see the other side. They know that sentiment counts, and they hesitate to antagonize neutral sentiment. They realize that a great modern war disturbs the economy of the world, and they are loth to increase the disturbance by extending the scope and the destructiveness of warfare.

At the outbreak of the World War, the Teutonic diplomatists made some effort to avoid the appearance of aggression. They were overridden by the military authorities, to whom the first blow seemed all important, and Germany declared war on Russia and on France. The German Foreign Office appreciated the political risks involved in the invasion of Belgium. Here again the diplomatists were overridden by the military chiefs. The immediate result was a British declaration of war. The entry of Great Britain into the war made it possible for Japan and Italy to join the coalition against the Central Empires.[1]

[1] See above, pp. 157–159.

So far as we can judge from the news that has been permitted to emerge from Germany or has leaked out, in spite of the censorship, during the past three years, the difference between the military and the political point of view has continued to manifest itself in conflicts between the military and the political authorities. There seem to have been differences of opinion regarding air raids upon French and British towns. There seem to have been conflicts in the matter of civilian deportations. In the matter of submarine warfare against merchant vessels, it is notorious that there was not only conflict but a series of political crises. After the "war zone" proclamation issued by the German Admiralty in February, 1915, the German government backed and filled on this issue for nearly two years, until in January, 1917, the navalists won a complete triumph. The unsuccessful struggle and the final defeat of the political authorities were marked by the disappearance from public life of two foreign secretaries and a chancellor. These officials were sacrificed, apparently, either because they had opposed ruthless warfare or because they had failed to avert its inevitable political consequences.[1]

[1] See Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, chapters xii. and xvii.

The submarine issue was of prime importance, because in unrestricted and indiscriminate warfare on maritime commerce the German military authorities saw the best chance of crippling Great Britain, if not the only chance of winning the war; while the German political authorities rightly feared energetic and widespread neutral reactions. Sea-warfare upon enemy commerce, as previously conducted, rarely involved the destruction of captured vessels. In the great majority of cases this was unnecessary, and it was contrary to the interest of the captor state. Normally, therefore, captured vessels continued to minister to the needs of the world. In submarine warfare, on the other hand, even in so-called "cruiser warfare," the destruction of the captured vessel is almost always necessary. Destruction ceases to be the exception and becomes the rule. The resulting diminution of sea tonnage is a serious injury to the whole world. Unrestricted submarine warfare against enemy vessels increases the injury; unrestricted and indiscriminate submarine warfare against all merchant vessels, enemy and neutral, makes the injury intolerable. If Germany had deliberately sought an issue that would array the world against her, she could hardly have found one more certain to accomplish this result.

Unrestricted and indiscriminate warfare against sea trade is not only illegal and barbarous, it not only shocks the sense of right and the conscience of humanity, but it also menaces the welfare of the world because of the extent to which civilization rests upon ocean carriage.

In the conduct as in the inception of this war the German military authorities have had their way. Never in the history of the world has the militarist theory had a fairer or a more crucial test. What has been the result of the experiment? The Central Empires were victorious at the outset; they say that they are still victorious. What allies has victory brought them? Turkey and Bulgaria. They expected to fight two powers, Russia and France, and two or three small states. In the fourth year of the war they find themselves confronted by a coalition of six powers and thirteen other states. They expected to wage a European war. Except for petty struggles with French and Belgian forces in Africa, there was to be no world war: that was not to come until they had won their European war. Today Germany has enemies in every continent and in the islands of all the seas. German theorists have learned that the world, although politically unor-

ganized, is capable in an emergency of collective action against an offending state, just as the mining camp, although destitute of constituted authority, is capable of collective action against a claim-jumper. The world is organizing itself into something that looks very like a vigilance committee.

In the conduct as in the inception of this war, not only has Germany disregarded Bismarck's "imponderables," it has also left out of account world factors of material weight. The German military authorities have manifested in a most striking way the defects of the single-track mind, and they have drawn Germany into dire peril. In overriding the political authorities of their own Empire they have ignored the teachings, not only of Bismarck, but of the greatest and most philosophical of the German military writers—teachings which furnish a partial antidote for his own poisonous doctrines of ruthlessness. In his great book, *On War*, Clausewitz says:

> . . . The art of war, in its highest point of view, is policy . . . a policy that fights battles instead of writing notes.
>
> According to this view, to leave a great military enterprise, or the plan for one, to a purely military [as contrasted with a political] judgment and deci-

sion is a distinction which cannot be allowed, and is even prejudicial; indeed, *it is an irrational proceeding to consult professional soldiers on the plan of a war*, that they may give a purely military opinion upon what the cabinet ought to do. Experience . . . teaches us that, notwithstanding the multifarious branches and scientific character of military art in the present day, still the leading outlines of a war are always determined by the cabinet—that is, if we would use technical language, by a political not a military organ.

This is perfectly natural. *None of the principal plans which are required for a war can be made without an insight into the political relations.* . . .[1]

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. iii., p. 126.

German Land Hunger

And Other Underlying Causes of the War

GERMAN LAND HUNGER

AND OTHER UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THE WAR

TOWARD the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth, a few European and American writers began to note the development in Germany of disquieting tendencies. A literature demanding the expansion of German influence and power, and hinting or stating that this expansion could be obtained only through war, was growing in bulk and was gaining wide circulation. German military force was being perfected with a concentration of national effort unexampled in history, and a powerful navy was building. In spite of these and other warnings, the world refused to be alarmed. In Europe, where alarm had been endemic for half a century and had quite inevitably taken on the milder form of chronic anxiety, there seemed to be no increase of apprehension.

Since the outbreak of the World War the early alarmists have come into their own. The ground

they broke has been subjected to intensive cultivation. The recent history of Germany has been minutely studied and the German literature of the last generation has been ransacked in the effort to discover and formulate the underlying causes of the cataclysm. Today we are beginning to make tentative syntheses.

I

During the greater part of the nineteenth century, and particularly from the War of Liberation to the Franco-German War, German political sentiment was strongly Liberal. There were few republicans, but there were also relatively few supporters of absolute monarchic power. The dominant ideal was popular government under written constitutions restricting princely authority. Above all things the Germans desired national unity; but they desired liberty as well, and they expected to gain unity through liberty. The Revolution of 1848 gave them an opportunity to carry out this programme. The failure of the Frankfort Parliament to give Germany either liberty or unity discredited popular government. Between the years 1864 and 1871 Bismarck unified Germany and gave to the German people, not popular

government indeed, but at least representative institutions. This he accomplished, in spite of the strenuous opposition of the Prussian Diet from 1862 to 1866, through the Prussian monarchy and the Prussian army. The result of this double experience—the failure of 1848, the triumphs of 1866 and of 1871—was to establish a conviction that democratic government is hopelessly inefficient and to enhance the prestige of the Hohenzollern dynasty and of the army. A very large portion of the old Liberal party abandoned its traditions; and in the generation that grew up during and after the establishment of the German Empire there were practically no Liberals of the old school, and few Radicals except the Social Democrats. That Germany was reverting, since 1870, to the monarchic ideal of government, while the rest of Europe continued to move towards democracy, was one of the things that tended to isolate the new Empire from the prevailing currents of European thought and feeling. In particular, the influence of France, which had been very great in Germany since the Thirty Years' War, was sensibly lessened. The German attitude towards France was, after 1870, on the whole, one of contempt; although the rapidity with which France rallied from the shock of defeat and the growing

stability of the French Republic aroused, especially in Prussian military circles, a degree of apprehension.

Before 1870 there was little of the spirit of militarism in Germany, outside of Prussia, nor was the Prussian people as a whole animated by this spirit. Few Germans even dreamed of military conquests or of world empire.

Soon after 1870, however, the consciousness of military power and the rapid development of German manufactures and foreign trade began to create new ambitions. Because their chief commercial competitor, Great Britain, had dependencies all over the world, the Germans ascribed a probably exaggerated importance to the possession of colonies. By manufacturers and merchants colonies were desired, at first, chiefly as trading posts, which were to facilitate the opening and exploitation of wider markets. This desire was met, to some extent, by the colonial policy inaugurated by Bismarck in 1884–85. Soon, however, there arose a demand for colonies of a different type, colonies of exploitation, from which Germany could obtain the tropical products it needed either for home consumption or for its manufacturing industries. Simultaneously there appeared a demand for colonies of settlement,

in which Germany's surplus population could find new homes under the new imperial flag. In so far as such colonies were to be established across the seas, the aspirations of German expansionists were largely sentimental. With the development of German manufacturing industries and the growing demand for labour at home, German emigration, formerly so great in volume, shrank to negligible proportions. There was, however, increasing indignation over the millions of Germans "lost" in the nineteenth century; and the fact that the Germans who were leaving the Fatherland to better themselves could not be induced to settle in the colonies that Germany already possessed kept this indignation alive.

More dangerous to the peace of the world than these aspirations was the growing demand for colonies of settlement in Europe. Those Germans who watched with increasing alarm the objectionable features of modern industrialism—the transfer of population from country to city, the growth of luxury and the increase of want, the physical deterioration of the labouring classes, the moral deterioration of the very rich and the very poor, the decreasing birth rate—these demanded colonization to preserve the balance

between the industrial and the agricultural population. They believed that with the acquisition of territory adapted to agricultural settlement the declining German birth rate would rise again, and that the position of the German people in Europe and in the world would be secured and improved by the renewed natural increase of its population. Efforts to develop "home colonization"—for example, by the wholesale expropriation of the Prussian Poles—were unsuccessful. Home colonization on any large scale obviously demanded an extension of the boundaries of the German Empire by the conquest of neighbouring territories. To cite one of many utterances:

> To live, to lead a healthy and happy life, we need great tracts of new arable land. With these, imperialism can and must provide us. . . . Of what use to us is Germanism in Brazil or in South Africa, however successfully it may develop? It will greatly help the expansion of the German race; it will do little for the power of the German Empire. On the other hand, increase of German continental territory and of the number of German peasants . . . will form a protective barrier against the flood of our enemies and will give a firm foundation to our growing power.[1]

[1] Albrecht Wirth, *Volkstum und Weltmacht in der Geschichte* (1906), p. 235.

By the same

simple plan,
That they should take who have the power
And they should keep who can,[1]

colonies of settlement and colonies of exploitation, to say nothing of more and better trading posts, might be acquired in other parts of the world. These were the sinister implications of the demand for "a place in the sun."[2]

In the German mind there gradually developed a vision of a German world empire, based on an expanded Fatherland with a rapidly increasing population, dominating a confederation of states that was to extend from Scandinavia to Asia Minor, holding over-sea possessions of all sorts in eastern Asia, in Africa, in Latin America and in the islands of all the oceans. There appeared a singular and characteristically German theory that the establishment of such an empire would redress a historical wrong and would therefore be a triumph of distributive justice. "In the division of the non-European world among the European powers," said Treitschke, "Germany has always hitherto failed to get its share."[3] Similarly Professor Dove:

[1] Wordsworth, "Rob Roy's Grave."
[2] William II, speech of June 18, 1901.
[3] *Politik*, vol. i., p. 42.

> A nation that has won for itself through its own efficiency so important a place in commerce and industry as the Germans have secured cannot possibly stand aside, as it used to do, while other nations, by nature much less industrious, try to secure for themselves in the coming redivision of Africa the lion's share. We mean at last to get what belongs to us, because we need it, because we cannot do without it. . . .[1]

The new land hunger clothed its nakedness with broader and more specious theories. To justify expansion through war, a philosophical doctrine was developed. The theory of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest was applied to the competition of nations. German thinkers did not ignore the fact that in human society conscious co-operation had introduced a new factor, but they restricted its function to the single group, and they refused to recognize that civilization had developed any group worthy of consideration except the national state. Among national states, the law of survival through struggle maintained unmitigated sway.

This Neo-Darwinism appealed strongly to the Germans, because of their growing conviction that they were, in all important characteristics,

[1] "Die grossen Wirtschaftsgebiete Afrikas," in *Weltwirtschaft*, vol. v., no. 8 (November, 1915), p. 162.

superior to all other nations. Because they were fittest to survive, they were destined to survive; and the fiercer the struggle, the more rapid must be their triumph. Throughout the nineteenth century German historians had been re-writing, and German philosophers had been re-interpreting, the history of Germany, of Europe, and of the world on the basis of an assumed superiority of the Germans.[1] They ended by convincing themselves and their countrymen that this superiority was an established and indisputable fact. The contributions of the Mediterranean and particularly those of the Latin peoples to the civilization of the world, alike in ancient and in modern times, were minimized; and in so far as they were conceded, they were attributed to infiltrations of Teutonic blood and genius. This national self-glorification, relatively modest in its beginnings and, until 1870, little more pronounced than the self-esteem not infrequently manifested by other nations, was subsequently carried beyond sane limits. German victories in war, German achievements in civil administration and in social organi-

[1] To the Swiss professor, Antoine Guilland, we are indebted for an early and penetrating study of the tendency of German historiography in the nineteenth century: *L'Allemagne nouvelle et ses historiens: Niebuhr, Ranke, Mommsen, Sybel, Treitschke* (1899).

zation, German progress in the application of science to industry and the rapid expansion of German commerce—all these heightened German national pride to the point of megalomania.

"Megalomania" is the term used by more than one German to describe the Pan-Germanist state of mind. In a pamphlet published in 1915, Müller-Holm writes:

> What has caused us to be completely detested by civilized nations is the insufferable attitude of the Pan-Germanists. "Pan-Germanists" is their name in politics; in science they are called "Race Theorists." Do you wish to know what "Race Theory" is? It is a so-called science, of which the purpose is to prove that the Germans stand first among all nations of the world, that all the achievements of civilization since the beginning of history have proceeded from them, and that the rule of the world fitly and rightly belongs to them. . . . What an impression of Germany's politicians, of the aims of German patriots, must a foreigner derive from these products of national megalomania? One writer expects a "Pan-Germanic Empire," embracing "the present Empire; the other Teutonic territories in Europe, including Scandinavia and the Netherlands, as equal partners in the Empire; further, the territories of the Latins in the West and in the Southwest and of Austria's western and southern Slavs, as dependent colonial territories, besides all America south of the Amazon." Another writer calmly launches the assertion that the

> cultural value of a nation depends on its percentage of "the blond race"; and on this basis he undertakes to prove, in each individual case, that all the great men of the non-Teutonic nations were of Teutonic blood. . . . The views of these dangerous fanatics quite dominate public opinion.[1]

The writer to whom Müller-Holm refers, at the close of the passage cited above, is probably Ludwig Woltmann, who asserts that Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar were of the Teutonic type, and conjectures that Napoleon was a descendant of the Vandals. Woltmann also identifies Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo, Montaigne, Voltaire, and other illustrious Italians and Frenchmen, as Teutons of the full blood. He tells us that Shakespeare and Raphael were Teutons of the half blood, and that they were geniuses, not because of, but in spite of the non-Teutonic blood in their veins. His interpretation of history is even more extraordinary than his ethnology; witness the following statements:

> The entire European civilization, even in Slav and Latin countries, is the work of the Teutonic race. . . . The Papacy, the Renaissance, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic Empire were achievements of the Teutonic spirit. . . .

[1] *Der englische Gedanke in Deutschland: Zur Abwehr des Imperialismus* (Munich, 1915), pp. 132–134.

> Papacy and Empire are both Teutonic organizations for domination, meant to subjugate the world. The Teutonic race is called to circle the earth with its rule, to exploit the treasures of nature and of human labour power, and to make the passive races servient elements in its cultural development.[1]

German Neo-Darwinism found an ethical basis in the assumption that the civilization of the world had been developed in the past and was to be perfected in the future through the international struggle for power and the survival of the nations best qualified for dominion. German supremacy would benefit the whole world. Neo-Darwinism found also a religious basis in the assumption that the struggle for existence and for power was the method of progress ordained by God. One of the popularizers of Pan-Germanism found the assertion of this great truth in the words of Christ: "Many are called, but few are chosen" —words, he told his countrymen, "whose profound wisdom Darwin has enabled us to grasp."[2] German megalomania had already expressed itself in religious phrases: in the claim that the Germans were "the chosen people" and "the salt of the earth."[3]

[1] *Politische Anthropologie* (1903), pp. 255, 290–298.
[2] Klaus Wagner, *Krieg*, pp. 145–146.
[3] William II, speech of March 22, 1905.

It is perhaps the most ominous symptom of modern German megalomania that the Germans have desired and have striven to develop a civilization that shall be peculiarly their own, genuinely German. Until the nineteenth century all educated Germans realized that their civilization, like all modern European civilization, was a continuation of the ancient Mediterranean civilization; that we moderns had drawn, as Maine says, our religion from Judæa, our art and letters and philosophy from Greece, our politics and law from Rome. Goethe simply voiced this recognition when he said:

> We Germans are of yesterday. For a century we have indeed made earnest efforts to cultivate ourselves; but a couple of centuries may well pass before so much spirituality (*Geist*) and higher culture make their way and become general among our countrymen . . . that it will be possible to say of them: "It was long ago that they were barbarians."[1]

To Goethe, culture was identical with European civilization. Today, *Kultur* means something quite different. Modern German philosophers have attempted to explain the difference; they agree on one point only, that German culture

[1] *Gespräche* (Biedermann ed.), vol. vi., p. 125.

is something genuinely German (*echt deutsch*). In the German social life, however, there has never been anything *echt deutsch* save what was there from the start, what was *urdeutsch*. In Germany, as in Scandinavia, in England and in North France, every element in the social life that is not barbaric, every idea and every institution that has lifted the people out of barbarism, is of foreign origin. To Germanize civilization in Germany, to weed out everything exotic and to cultivate only the indigenous growths, necessarily means a reversion toward barbarism. Such reversions have in fact occurred. Some of them leave other nations unconcerned. If the Germans like their genuinely German architecture and sculpture, the fact that other people find these products barbarous is immaterial. The European attitude was indicated, during this war, by the French artist who protested against a demand that Berlin should be treated as the Germans had treated Rheims. "No revenge," he said, "could be more adequate than to leave Berlin as it is." Of more serious concern are the German reversions in politics, in ethics and in religion; for these menace the security of the world. In politics the Germans will have neither Roman liberty nor Roman *imperium*, nor

the blend of the two that has been worked out in England. Parliamentary government is not even genuinely Teutonic (*echt germanisch*), for it started, not in England, but in Spain. Accordingly, the Germans have retained and fortified the Teutonic type of monarchy, which rests on barbaric allegiance to a war lord. Nietzsche, who in other respects admires the Latin civilization and would retain it, quarrels with Christian ethics and constructs a German system; but his superman is morally the cave man, made more dangerous by his mental acquisitions. In religion they have reverted to the "old God" whom the elder Moltke worshipped and whom William II invokes—a God who has the lineaments of the tribal Jahveh but swings the hammer of Thor.

Of all the recent German reversions towards barbarism, that which has most astounded the civilized world is the attitude of many if not most German writers towards war. To them war is not an evil, necessary perhaps, but still an evil; it is a thing good in itself. To this attitude, however, they were inevitably urged by all the forces of feeling and of thought we have examined. National ambition was born of recent successful wars. Confidence in victory was based on the traditional valour of the Teutons; on their re-

corded triumphs since the time when their savage ancestors first forced their way over the Alps and across the Rhine to a place in the sun; on the thorough organization and training of their great modern armies, and on the skill and patience with which modern German students of war, the élite of the nation, had adapted all the acquests of science to the ends of slaughter. To ambition and confidence add a conviction that war is the test of a nation's right to survive, and that the progress of the world is achieved through the survival of the fittest nations; add also a belief that victory in war is not only a just biological and sociological verdict, but also a judgment of God in favour of his chosen people—surely there was here a combination of sentiments and ideas suited to penetrate the national mind along every line of approach and to shape the national soul from the top to the bottom of the social structure. That is why the praises of war were sung by German writers of all sorts and conditions, not only by military writers, but also by historians and publicists, savants and philosophers, poets and ministers of religion.

Given this national attitude toward war, there is an especially direct threat to the peace and order of the world in the expression which German

Neo-Darwinism (with its refusal to recognize the world, even the civilized world, as a society in which co-operation has to any degree displaced or can advantageously displace survival through struggle) has found in legal theory. The dogma of the unlimited and irresponsible sovereignty of the state is accentuated. This dogma is no product of German or of modern thought. It comes down from the Roman Empire, which included the whole civilized world. The development and co-existence of a number of civilized states has obviously destroyed the original basis of the dogma. Modern states are necessarily members of a society of nations, and no single state can claim, much less exercise, irresponsible power. In Germany, however, and also in other parts of the world, absolute sovereignty is still attributed to the several states, or at least to those states that can be regarded as "powers." It is of course a corollary of this dogma that international rules and customs bind the single state in so far only as it accepts them, and so long only as its peculiar interests do not require their abandonment. It is a further corollary that every treaty is concluded with the tacit reservation, *rebus sic stantibus*. Other than German writers have asserted this doctrine; but few writers outside of Germany

have pushed it to the same extreme. In Germany it seems to mean that treaty engagements are to be observed only so long as the conditions that originally made the treaty advantageous continue to exist, and that, so soon as a government sees more profit than risk in repudiating its engagements, it is bound, as the trustee of the interests of the nation, to rescind or to break the treaty. When Bethmann-Hollweg characterized a treaty, signed by the accredited representatives of five European powers, as "a scrap of paper," he faithfully reproduced the view professed by the majority of German publicists. Here, again, we have a reversion, and one that goes back all the way to barbarism; for without the sanctity of plighted faith there is neither law nor civilization.

Unless, after this war, the Germans are willing to reconnect themselves with the historical European culture, more than Goethe's two centuries may pass before their neighbours will be able to say: "It was long ago that they were barbarians."

To these German confessions, or rather boasts, of greed and unscrupulousness, foreign statesmen, as President Wilson has said, paid little attention. They "regarded what German professors

expounded in their class-rooms and German writers set forth to the world . . . as the dream of minds detached from practical affairs, as preposterous private conceptions of German destiny."[1] Still less attention was paid to this German propaganda by the foreign press. The man in the street never suspects, and the student of history does not always realize, how much explosive force may slumber within the shell of a theory. Suspicion that might have been aroused by the concrete ambitions displayed in the more recent Pan-Germanist literature was largely disarmed by the very frankness of their avowal. Men who were injudicious enough to say such things need not be taken seriously. It was in fact only the less authoritative expounders of Pan-Germanism who dotted all their i's and crossed all their t's; the more responsible leaders discussed peaceful penetration, commercial treaties, customs unions, and other methods of expanding German influence without war. The aggressive militant tone taken by such writers as Bötticher (alias Paul de Lagarde), Bley, Lange, Wirth, Tannenberg, and Frymann seemed to put them in a small class by themselves. As for Klaus Wagner, if he were not mad, like Nietzsche, he must be purposely

[1] Flag-Day Address, June 14, 1917.

peppering Pan-Germanism in order to make it more marketable.

Foreign scholars—and few but scholars took the pains to follow this militarist and annexationist literature—forgot that popularizers do more than "solid" writers to mould opinion. And those who knew, or were told by German friends, that at the beer tables German civilians were annexing little neighbours and dividing great empires, and who found the fact amusing, forgot that in Germany the *Biertischpolitiker* does at least as much as the press itself to consolidate sentiment.

To President Wilson's statement, that little attention was paid by foreign statesmen to the Pan-Germanist agitation, one exception must be made. In France this movement undoubtedly increased the anxiety, not only of statesmen, but also of the entire nation. In France the memories of 1870 had not grown dim. In France apprehension was kept alive by recurrent crises and notes of warning in the German press. Frenchmen were well aware that it was a fixed idea in German army circles that Germany would never be "safe" —safe to pursue her aims of domination—until France should be crushed. Of France, through all these years, it might be said, as Keats said of his Titan goddess:

There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its storèd thunder labouring up.

II

For the study of the annexation movement in Germany since the outbreak of the World War, a Swiss scholar, S. Grumbach, has given us a valuable mass of material.[1] He has been able to use, not only such books, pamphlets, and articles as were published in Germany from August, 1914, to the end of May, 1916, but also many petitions, tracts, and circulars, printed, mimeographed, or typewritten, that were not published but were privately distributed; and not only such matter as was circulated without governmental interference, but also some important documents of which the reproduction and the circulation were restricted or wholly forbidden.

Of the industry and conscientious care with which this book has been compiled and edited it would be difficult to speak too highly. The most

[1] S. Grumbach, *Das annexionistische Deutschland: Eine Sammlung von Dokumenten die seit dem 4 August, 1914, in Deutschland öffentlich oder geheim verbreitet wurden; mit einem Anhang: Antiannexionistische Kundgebungen.* Payot & Co., Lausanne, 1917; x, 471 pp.

important documents are printed entire. In dealing with books, pamphlets, and articles, Grumbach is of course compelled to confine himself to extracts; but there is no evidence that he has unfairly wrested passages from their context. There is, indeed, evidence to the contrary; for many of the utterances he cites would be much more startling had he omitted the qualifications that accompany them. Nor does he present demands only without the arguments by which they are supported. He does not confine his book to annexationist literature; he has collected and presented, in a "second part" which forms nearly one-fifth of his book, such protests as he has been able to discover.

How widely annexation sentiment was diffused in Germany before the war is shown by the rapidity with which demands for annexation were formulated by all sorts and conditions of Germans in the very first months of the great conflict. Of the annexationist books and pamphlets from which Grumbach draws longer or shorter extracts, twenty-three were published in the first five months of the war, thirty-six in the year 1915, thirteen in the first five months of 1916. Of the publications dated 1915, some may have appeared and more must have been written in 1914. These data,

so far as they go, militate strongly against the theory that annexation sentiment was created by the war, or that it became general only when the duration of the war begot the feeling that Germany must have something to show for her expenditure of blood and treasure.

Still stronger evidence of the wide diffusion of annexation sentiment is afforded by the attitude taken by the various German political parties. Before the end of 1914 single leaders of the National Liberal and Progressive parties—parties representing particularly the middle classes—had openly advocated annexations.[1] In the course of the following year all German parties except the Social Democrats committed themselves fully to this programme.[2] The Social Democratic party steadily repudiated annexations[3]; but several of its leaders construed this declaration as a repudiation of "conquests" only, and not as excluding such "rectifications of frontiers" in the East and in the West as might be necessary for the protection of the Fatherland. This sacrifice of their internationalist principles was largely forced upon them by their constituents. In the autumn of 1914, the *Courier*, the official organ

[1] Grumbach, pp. 71, 104.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 33–40.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 429 *et seq.*

of the German Union of Transportation Workers, which had an enrollment of 100,000 members, expressed the hope that the German flag would wave forever over Antwerp; and Paul Lensch, at one time chief editor of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, later on the staff of the *Hamburger Echo* (both Social Democratic), asserted that the right of populations to determine their own destiny must be thrown upon the scrap-heap, and that Bismarck showed himself an ass when he neglected to annex Belfort. In June, 1915, the *Frankfurter Volksstimme* declared that the Social Democratic party must have a positive programme, and that this must include changes in the map of Europe. In April, 1916, the same journal gave its support to the demand for German colonies of settlement in eastern Europe. "It is no characteristic of socialism," the editor declared, "to place itself in conflict with new developments." In August, 1915, the *Harburger Volksblatt* expressed regret that the Social Democratic party had again committed itself to the formula of "no annexations." The staunch Marxist, Kolb of Karlsruhe, and Meerfeld, chief editor of the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, pronounced this formula un-Marxian. Several Social Democratic members of the Imperial Diet fell promptly into

line. Peuss-Dessau pleaded (January 2, 1915) for the annexation of Belgium, in the interest of the Belgians themselves. Landsberg advocated expansion in the East to the line of the Naref, which meant the taking of territory with nearly 5,000,000 Slav inhabitants. Oskar Geck, and also the Baden deputies Adelung and Marum, expressed views identical with those of Kolb and Meerfeld.[1] Finally, the president of this party, Philipp Scheidemann, speaking in the Imperial Diet, April 6, 1916, launched the winged word:

> One must be a political infant to persuade himself that a whole continent can be set on fire, that millions of men can be killed or wounded, without the removal of a single frontier stone placed by some musty old diplomatist.[2]

The only political group that has opposed annexations consistently, and without qualifications or reservations, is the minority fraction of Social Democrats, led, until his imprisonment, by Karl Liebnecht, and since that time by Hugo Haase.

It must of course be admitted that the war intensified annexation sentiment. If it did nothing else, it furnished new arguments for annexations. The German people, as we know, accepted, in the teeth of all evidence to the contrary, the official

[1] Grumbach, pp. vi., vii., 111–119. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 114–115.

statements that the war was planned by Great Britain and begun by Russia. Of those more intelligent persons who saw that Germany had in fact begun the war, the majority held that if Germany had not forestalled her enemies they would soon have attacked her, and that it was the right and the duty of German statecraft to anticipate the impending attack and to wage the inevitable war at a moment when the European situation seemed favourable. Professor Schiemann wrote in 1915:

> Bernhardi's brave books pointed out, in correct anticipation of events, the necessity of grasping the sword before the conspiracy that menaced Germany came to the point of action.[1]

And later in the same year General Baron von Gebsattel explained:

> We desired this war . . . because we were conscious that the more resolutely and promptly a people which in any event is to be forced to fight for its existence chooses a favourable moment for drawing the sword, the more easily will the war be conducted and the lighter will be the sacrifices.[2]

Each of these theories, that of defence and that of anticipation, assumed that Germany was a

[1] *Ein Verleumder: Glossen zur Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, p. 6.

[2] "Das Gebot der Stunde," in *Der Panther*, no. 10 (October, 1915), pp. 1178–1179.

peaceful nation surrounded by quarrelsome neighbours. Holding this view, it was possible for Germans to insist, with a good conscience, that these dangerous neighbours must in future be restrained. Germany must at least obtain such strategic frontiers as to give her ampler protection against future assaults; and it would be much safer so to cripple her chief enemies that any future attack on their part would be hopeless. This point of view gave annexation sentiment not only a valuable argument but also, what was worth even more, a synonym for annexation which was less crude and which implied justification—"guaranties and securities." The Social Democrats, as we have seen, repudiated annexations, but the majority fraction did not reject territorial guaranties and securities.

The belief that Germany was a peaceful country, which either was or soon would have been assailed, also served to justify the demand that her enemies be punished. In addition to ceding frontier districts, they must pay the full cost of the war. As the war went on and the costs mounted, and as it became clear that no European country would be able to pay an adequate money indemnity, a new argument for annexation appeared, succinctly expressed in the phrase "indemnity in land."

Not less important was the appeal to patriotic sentiment that appears in every war. The German flag was not to be hauled down where it had once waved; the graves of German heroes were not to be left in the hands of their enemies. To this latter sentiment the National Liberal leader, Bassermann, gave an economic expression which perhaps made a special appeal to the German Michael: "We shall know how to hold firmly for all time the lands that have been manured (*gedüngt*) with German blood."[1]

Of the annexationist declarations that appeared in Germany during the war, the most significant are two memorials addressed to Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg. One of these, dated May 20, 1915, was presented on behalf of six of the most important industrial and agricultural associations of Germany and was signed by their official heads. The other memorial was adopted at a meeting held in Berlin, June 20, 1915, and was signed by 352 professors, 158 schoolteachers and clergymen, 145 superior administrative officials, mayors and members of city councils, 148 judges and advocates, 40 members of the Imperial Diet and of state legislatures, 18 retired admirals and generals, 182 manufacturers, merchants, and

[1] Grumbach, p. 71.

bankers, 52 agriculturists, and 252 artists, writers, and publishers. These two memorials[1] may surely be taken as representing a very large and very important body of opinion.

In the second and very much smaller portion of his book,[2] Grumbach gives us either in full or in extracts a collection of anti-annexation utterances. He separates miscellaneous protests "*aus dem Bürgertum*" from the Social Democratic protests. The Social Democratic material consists of petitions and resolutions, manifestoes and circulars, speeches and articles published in journals. The attitude of the independent socialists—we have already seen how little significance is to be attached to the formal declarations of the majority fraction—commands appreciation and admiration. This little group, representing a minority of the great Social Democratic party—how large a minority it is at present impossible to determine—has consistently opposed not annexations only but also the war itself. It has persistently denied that the war was forced upon Germany or was at the outset a defensive war.

From other than Social Democratic sources Grumbach has been able to collect little anti-annexation material. Over against 142 books,

[1] Printed in full, Grumbach, pp. 123–140. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 375–459.

pamphlets, and review articles advocating annexations, he is able to cite only three review articles and three pamphlets voicing protests. One of the three pamphlets was written by Dr. Quidde, the president of the German Peace Society. From this society we have also a set of resolutions, a petition sent to the Imperial Diet, and a speech delivered by Dr. Fried, the editor of the pacifist *Friedenswarte*, an excellent journal now published in Zurich and excluded from circulation in Germany.[1] For the rest, Grumbach gives us extracts from two leading articles published in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, and two memorials that were presented to the imperial chancellor and that emanated neither from socialists nor from pacifists.

One of these is the so-called Delbrück-Dernburg petition.[2] As early as October, 1914, Professor Hans Delbrück published in the *Preussische Jahrbücher* an eloquent warning against plans of conquest. In the spring of 1915, during his visit to the United States, Dr. Dernburg publicly stated that Germany would not annex Belgium nor any other European territory—a statement that elicited energetic protests from home journals.[3] In July, 1915, Delbrück, Dernburg, and 139 other prominent Germans — professors, government

[1] Grumbach, pp. 411–415. [2] *Ibid.*, 409–411. [3] *Ibid.*, 78, 81.

officials, manufacturers, financiers, editors, and a few retired military and naval officers—sent to the imperial chancellor a brief and very carefully worded protest against the annexation propaganda. The petitioners declare that Germany did not enter the war to make conquests; they reject in principle the incorporation in the German Empire of "peoples politically independent and accustomed to independence"; but they assert also that the occupied regions that Germany will vacate when peace is concluded must not be converted into a bulwark for Germany's enemies. (This, of course, refers mainly to Belgium.) They are not in favour of averting this peril by arrangements which must lead ultimately to annexation, but they are confident that victory will bring to the German nation rewards commensurate with its heroic deeds and sacrifices.

> The German nation [they say] can conclude no peace but one that provides secure bases for its strategic needs, for its political and economic interests, and for the unhampered exercise of its strength and its spirit of enterprise at home and on the free sea.

It is to be noted that this petition does not exclude but, in the phrase "secure bases," specifically reserves guaranties and securities. It will

be noted also that the German government is to have a free hand in disposing of the destinies of peoples who are not accustomed to self-government. In the autumn of the same year (1915) Professor Delbrück published in the *Preussische Jahrbücher*[1] articles advocating the annexation of the Russian Baltic provinces and the establishment of a kingdom of Poland in personal union with the kingdom of Saxony. As an alternative, he suggested giving Poland to Austria. In the same year another of the petitioners, the well-known Pan-Germanist Rohrbach, published a pamphlet in which he advocated the annexation of the Belgian Congo and of the Portuguese colony of Angola.[2]

This petition was obviously framed for foreign consumption. It was intended to counteract the bad impression created abroad, especially in neutral countries, by the annexation propaganda. It may have been intended also to discourage extravagant German hopes and to protect the imperial government against the reaction which would follow disillusion. Grumbach stretches a point in putting this petition among the anti-annexation documents.

[1] September, 1915, p. 560; October, 1915, p. 168.
[2] *Unsere koloniale Zukunft*, pp. 14–17.

Quite another spirit animates the petition presented to the chancellor early in June, 1915, on behalf of the "New Fatherland Alliance" (*Bund Neues Vaterland*).[1] The petitioners express their opposition not only to conquests but also to rectifications of frontiers. Such changes, they argue, would not secure Germany against future attacks; in many instances the proposed new frontiers would be more vulnerable than the old. In the present war Germany's enemies have not been able to attack her coasts; in a future war the German coast line, if extended, as the annexationists demanded, to Boulogne, would be far less easily defensible.[2] In the great plains of the East, new frontiers would obviously afford no greater security. And at what point could the advance be arrested? If the defence of East Prussia and Silesia demands "protective belts," would not these, when settled by Germans, require protection by new belts? "Is this protective-belt system to be extended *in infinitum*, until Germany reaches the Arctic and Pacific Oceans?"[3]

Positive arguments against annexations are found in the internal perils Germany would encounter in the attempt to rule additional millions

[1] Printed in full, Grumbach, pp. 375–408. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 395–398. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 387–388.

of alien subjects, and in the external peril she would inevitably evoke by arousing hatred and thirst for revenge in the countries despoiled and by offending the conscience of the civilized world.

> Our experiences tell us . . . that the violation of Belgian neutrality has almost everywhere made a disastrous and altogether lamentable impression on the feelings of neutrals; that this impression, despite the lapse of ten months, is in nowise effaced; that on the contrary it has in many cases been regrettably intensified. . . .
>
> Members of our Alliance know, from personal impressions, how strong has been the effect of the violation of Belgian neutrality upon the great majority of Americans, even upon those who were friendly to Germany. . . . It has been particularly difficult to make our appeal to a "state of necessity" intelligible to Americans. . . .
>
> The annexation of Belgium would be viewed in all countries as the forcible subjugation of a maltreated free nation, wholly clear of responsibility for her sad fate. With the strong prejudice already existing against us among many peoples, it would have a fearful and long enduring effect. . . .
>
> Should we insist upon maintaining demands for annexation which would make any conclusion of peace impossible within any calculable period, we should do our utmost to drive the neutrals into the camp of our enemies; we should turn against us first their sympathies and then perhaps their armies.[1]

[1] Grumbach, pp. 400–403.

In an earlier passage, in which the petitioners dealt with the annexation propaganda in its fullest scope, they wrote: "A ruthless victor would conjure up against himself the hostility of the whole world and would necessarily succumb to the alliance of all the powers."[1]

From the drunken Germany of the moment the petitioners appeal to the sober statecraft of an earlier generation. With a bitter irony that reveals a deep patriotic resentment they write:

> What a pitiable palterer was Bismarck, who in 1866 let Austria escape without cession of territory, and who in 1871 concluded a premature peace, without fully exploiting the favourable military situation and taking from the French Verdun and Belfort.[2]

This protest is one of the ablest and one of the most important documents that this war has evoked. The Alliance from which it proceeded numbered among its members, Grumbach tells us, men from many and very different circles—politicians, savants, manufacturers, financiers, and retired diplomatists. It was organized in November, 1914, by Baron von Tepper-Laski, "one of the best known of Prussian sportsmen." Its declared purpose was to further

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 377. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 384.

> all movements adapted to imbue the policy and diplomacy of the states of Europe with the thought of peaceful competition and of combination reaching over state lines (*überstaatlicher Zusammenschluss*), in order to secure political and economic adjustments among civilized nations. This can be achieved only by an abandonment of the system hitherto prevailing, which entrusts to a few persons decisions which bring welfare or woe to hundreds of millions of human beings.[1]

This is neither socialism nor radical pacifism; it is a sane and conservative internationalism, based on national self-government. The programme of the Alliance closely resembles that set forth by President Wilson: it hopes to make the world safer through democracy.

It is a cheering thing that such an association could be formed in Prussia, after the outbreak of the war, and among persons of such standing. It is an inspiring thing that its members should have dared not only to defy the dominant military influences but also to antagonize the opinions prevailing in their own social circles. This petition proves, more conclusively even than socialist or pacifist reactions, that there is today, even in Prussia, a sane and, let us hope, a saving remnant.

[1] Grumbach, p. 409.

III

To list the demands of individual German annexationists would be wearisome. To select the most extravagant demands would be interesting but unfair. It may be worth while, however, to indicate how and to what extent the outbreak and progress of the war modified the *ante bellum* aspirations voiced or hinted by the Pan-Germanists, and then to examine the concrete demands that may be regarded as representative, that seem to have embodied the hopes and expectations of the great majority of the German people.

Before the war, expansion over sea was, for obvious reasons, more generally and far more frankly discussed than expansion in Europe. After the outbreak of the war, for equally obvious reasons, over-sea expansion fell into the background. During the period covered by Grumbach's compilation, the Germans expected, indeed, to recover their colonies in Asia, in Africa, and in the islands of the Pacific; they even hoped to expand some of these colonies and to gain others of greater value. Despite the lessons of history, most Germans apparently believed that over-sea colonies could be retained and even acquired without control of the sea. Some indeed—among

them Haeckel—assumed that Germany could acquire such control, and that the war would end in the occupation of London.[1] Many more, however, believed that the British Empire would be hopelessly crippled, if not destroyed, by a Teutonic-Turkish conquest of Egypt.[2] Others assumed that the destinies of the world would be determined on the battlefields of Europe. During the first two years of the war, accordingly, much was still written and said about German expansion in Africa and even in China.

Regarding Latin-America there was a silence so sudden as to be audible. Grumbach's compilation contains but two allusions to this part of the world. Both the writers cited insist that there can be no question of political conquests in America. One of them, Herr Alfred Hettner, emits a growl concerning the Monroe Doctrine, which he appears to regard as an obstacle to German "economic and cultural activity."[3] The other, Dr. Karl Mehrmann, "in order to remove from the start any question as to the credibility of our assurances," admits that "at times in our country nationalistic covetousness extended (*hinüberzüngelte*) to South America." At present, however,

[1] Grumbach, pp. 240, 255, 296, 366.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 160, 225–229.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 300.

"the number of our enemies is great enough, and will remain great enough even after the war, to induce us to avoid everything that would unnecessarily stir up new enemies against us."[1]

About Middle Europe, the Balkans and southwestern Asia, on the other hand, much more was written and said after August 1, 1914, than before that date. These regions were already for the most part in the possession of the Central Empires or of their allies. To secure the territorial basis for a coherent world empire, all that was needed was complete control of the Balkan peninsula and an open road to Bagdad—and to British India. After the war, possibly during the war, the allied Middle European states were to be bound firmly together by military conventions and by customs treaties. Eventually they would form a great federal empire, into which would be drawn all the smaller neighbouring states, from the North Cape to the Bosphorus. The European boundaries of this empire would be determined primarily, of course, by the extent to which the Teutonic victories were utilized. With the outbreak of the war, the question of German annexations in Europe became a topic of active discussion. In the first five months of the war, nine books and

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 338–339.

pamphlets were devoted primarily to this question, three only to expansion over sea. In the publications that advocated expansion everywhere, the necessity of making European annexations was correspondingly emphasized.

In considering the scope and the character of the annexations demanded in Europe, I shall disregard the aspirations of single writers, however prominent and influential, and shall consider only the two important and representative memorials described above, that of the six industrial associations and that of the professors.

Neither of these memorials speaks of "annexing" Belgium, but both demand a degree of German control that would amount to annexation. The six associations say:

> As regards military and customs policy, and also as regards the monetary, banking, and postal systems, Belgium must be subjected to German imperial legislation. Railroads and canals are to be made portions of our transportation system.[1]

The professors say:

> We must keep Belgium . . . firmly in our hands as regards political and military matters and as regards economic interests. On no point is the German nation more united in its opinion; to it

[1] Grumbach, p. 125.

the retention of Belgium is an indubitable matter of honour.[1]

As regards France, the six associations declare:

The possession of the coast beyond the Belgian frontier, perhaps to the Somme, and therewith an outlet to the Atlantic Ocean, must be regarded as vital to our future importance on the sea. The hinterland that is to be acquired with this coast strip must be sufficient to secure complete strategic control and economic exploitation of the ports that we acquire on the Channel. Apart from the necessary acquisition of the ore fields of Briey, any further annexation of French territory is to be made exclusively on considerations of military strategy. It may be assumed as self-evident, after the experiences of this war, that we . . . cannot leave in the hands of the enemy the fortified positions which threaten us, particularly Verdun and Belfort, nor the western slope of the Vosges that lies between them. The acquisition of the line of the Meuse and the French coast on the Channel involves, in addition to the above mentioned ore fields of Briey, also the possession of the coal fields in the Departments of the North and of Pas-de-Calais.[2]

The professors formulate similar demands:

We must ruthlessly weaken France politically and economically, for the sake of our own existence, and we must improve against her our strate-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 134. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 125–126.

gical position. For this purpose, according to our conviction, a thorough improvement of our whole west front from Belfort to the coast is necessary. We must conquer as great a part as possible of the North-French Channel coast, in order to obtain greater strategical security against England and a better outlet to the ocean.[1]

As regards Russia the six associations explain:

The need for strengthening also the sound agricultural basis of our national economy . . . demands a considerable extension of the imperial and Prussian frontiers toward the East, by annexing parts at least of the Baltic provinces and the districts lying south of the same, taking into consideration at the same time the object of making our East-German frontier defensible from a military point of view.[2]

The professors are less definite, but more eloquent. They say:

On our eastern frontier the population of the Russian Empire is increasing at a monstrous rate —at a rate of two and one-half to three millions a year. Within a generation the population will amount to 250,000,000. Against this overwhelming preponderance on our eastern flank . . . Germany can assert herself only if she sets up a strong barrier . . . and if on the other hand the healthy growth of our own population is furthered by all possible means. Such a barrier and

[1] Grumbach, p. 134. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 126–127.

> also a basis for safeguarding the growth of our own population are to be found in the territory that Russia must cede to us. This must be agricultural land, adapted to settlement. Land, that gives us a healthy peasantry, this fresh fountain of all national and political power. Land, that can take over a part of our increase of population and offer to returning Germans, who desire to turn their backs upon the hostile foreign world, a new home in the old home. Land, that increases Germany's economic independence . . . by enabling her to nourish herself, that provides the needed counterpoise against the advancing industrialization and urbanization of our people, that preserves the equipoise of our economic forces . . . and prevents the perilous lapse into English one-sidedness. Land, that arrests a declining birth rate, checks emigration and alleviates the dearth of housing facilities (*Wohnungsnot*). Land, where the process of resettlement and Germanization will open new careers also to the intellectual proletariat. Such land, required for our physical, moral, and spiritual health, is to be found first of all in the East.[1]

The petition of the New Fatherland Alliance was elicited by and is a reply to the memorial of the six associations. The Alliance translates the territorial demands of the associations, "attempting," it says, "to interpret them as modestly as possible," into approximate statements of areas

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

and populations to be annexed.[1] The figures may be tabulated as follows:

COUNTRIES	SQUARE KILOMETRES	POPULATION
Belgium	30,000	7,500,000
France	20,000	3,500,000
Russia	80,000	5,000,000
Totals	130,000	16,000,000

Both the six associations and the professors are convinced that it would be dangerous to the German Empire to admit the inhabitants of its annexed districts to full political equality with its German population. The government and administration of Belgium, the associations say, "must be so conducted that the inhabitants shall obtain no influence upon the political destinies of the German Empire." As regards the populations to be taken over from France and from Russia, the same statement is made. In the case of the French citizens who are to fall under German rule, this recommendation is based on "our experiences in Alsace-Lorraine." The professors are of the same opinion: "To the part of the French population that we take over" and "to the inhabitants of Belgium, no political influence in the Empire is

[1] Grumbach, pp. 379, 380.

to be conceded." As regards the Slavs, no such statement is made by the professors, because, as we shall presently see, very few Slavs were to be "taken over." The Slavs were to be taken away.

Rather than attempt myself to characterize these proposals, let me again cite the Alliance:

> How great a task would be imposed upon Germany, even in times of peace, if . . . more than 16,000,000 inhabitants, almost all animated by the bitterest hostility against everything German, were to be loaded upon the Empire, with its population of 67,000,000; what perils would be involved in times of peace, to say nothing of times of war—these questions have not wholly escaped the attention of the authors of the Memorial. This explains the fact that they advance a further demand. . . . In the annexed countries government and administration are to be so conducted that "the inhabitants shall obtain no influence upon the destinies of the German Empire."
>
> In other words, the population is to be ruled by the German Empire without being able to exercise any political rights in the German Empire. . . . This system is to be imposed, not only in the East, upon Russian subjects, but also in the West, on Belgian and French citizens, accustomed to the fullest liberty and to democratic constitutions.
>
> . . . To the monstrous proposal of converting 16,000,000 foreign and hostile human beings into compulsory members of the German Empire there

> is thus added a second monstrosity. No sane person will believe that any such forcible subjugation could be permanent. Rather would it be fearfully avenged upon the German nation.[1]

The six associations and the professors concur in certain further recommendations. In Belgium, "the economic enterprises and possessions that are important for the domination of the country," in the districts to be taken from France, "the economic resources to be found in these districts, including medium and large land holdings," are to be taken from their former proprietors and "put into German possession." So the six associations. The professors use only slightly variant terms: they speak of "the enterprises and possessions that give economic power" and they urge that these be "transferred from hostile to German hands." Both memorials suggest that the expropriated French citizens shall be indemnified and taken over by France, as part of the war indemnity to be paid by that country. Neither memorial explains how the expropriated Belgians are to be indemnified, or what is to become of them. As regards the districts to be ceded in the East, the six associations tersely indicate that "the war indemnity to be paid by Russia must consist

[1] Grumbach, pp. 380–381.

largely in the transfer of private titles to land." The professors are more explicit:

> Russia is over-rich in land, and the land of which she is to cede us political control we shall demand . . . freed for the most part from private titles. . . . The Russian population is not so firmly rooted in the soil as is that of western and central Europe. Russia itself has repeatedly transplanted large parts of its population to remote districts.[1]

Here again the Alliance provides us with an appropriate comment:

> In carrying out the annexations, the Memorial demands not only measures in the field of public law but also far-reaching attacks upon the right of private property. All possessions that carry with them strong economic and social influence . . . are to pass into German hands.
>
> This would be a revolution in the economic situation of individuals in the annexed countries such as no modern annexation has carried with it. It recalls—and the comparison is not on the whole favourable to the modern plan—the times of the great migrations of the nations. In those times the Roman citizen holding land in a Roman province conquered by the Teutons was obliged to cede, in one form or another, a part of his possessions to a Teuton conqueror.
>
> Thus one monstrosity begets another.[2]

An interesting illustration of the tricks that language can play with conscience is the way in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 381–382.

which the catchword of "strategic securities," which implies only defence against aggression, slides over, first into "political securities," which are to be obtained by transforming Germany's free neighbours into subjects of Germany without political rights, then into "economic securities," which are to be obtained by ejecting millions of foreign peasants, in order that Germany may not need to buy grain or meat from aliens, and by ejecting the owners of foreign mines and factories, in order that the Germans may gain something approaching a continental monopoly of important manufactures. On this last point the six associations furnish the chancellor with valuable detailed suggestions. Their memorial includes a careful survey of Naboth's mineral resources.[1]

The demands above summarized, especially the demand for wholesale expropriations, may be regarded by the advocates of the economic interpretation of history in general, and of this war in particular, as evidence of the truth of their theories. Those who are disposed to lay greater stress upon the psychological interpretation of history, and particularly of war, may however insist that the economic motives discernible in the German annexation propaganda are indistinguishable from

[1] Grumbach, pp. 128–131.

those which, in private life, animate the burglar, and that the problem that really deserves scientific examination is the process of feeling and of thought through which high-minded men come to regard international burglary as a national duty.

The six associations limit themselves to the problems of German aggrandizement and enrichment. The professors are mindful also of the interests of their allies, or at least of Germany's interests in the proper development of Middle Europe.

> We admit that the blockade by which England has transformed Germany during the period of the war into a closed commercial state has taught us something. It has taught us above all that . . . we must make ourselves as independent as possible in all political, military, and economic matters, on the basis of an expanded and better secured home territory in Europe. Similarly we must organize upon the continent, in immediate connection with our land frontiers . . . the broadest possible continental economic domain. . . . For this purpose it is important permanently to secure Austria-Hungary, the Balkans, Turkey, and Asia Minor to the Persian Gulf against Russian and English ambitions.[1]

We have already seen what "security" against foreign ambitions means. What Austria needs for

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

her security in the way of "protective belts" is set forth by many German writers. Dr. Albert Ritter, for example, indicates what is necessary for the security of Triest:

> . . . The northern part of Venetia, the districts of Friuli and Treviso, up to a line running from the south end of Lake Garda to the mouth of the Piave, must be taken as a glacis at the foot of the Alps in order to ward off from Austria's Adriatic coast all future menace.[1]

IV

In a democratic country, especially if its government is of the parliamentary type, the existence of a public sentiment so general and so definitely formulated as annexation sentiment appears to be in Germany would make inquiry as to the attitude of the government so unimportant as to seem superfluous. In Germany also we may draw from utterances in the press conclusions regarding governmental policy, but for very different reasons. In Germany the relation between governmental opinion and public sentiment is almost the reverse of that obtaining in England and in France. Not only is the gov-

[1] *Der organische Aufbau Europas* (1916), pp. 27–28. Dr. Ritter's pen-name is Konrad von Winterstetten.

ernment independent of parliamentary majorities, but it is also, to a very considerable extent, independent of public sentiment. It needs, as all governments need, the support of the people; but through its control of the press, which is extensive in peace and ten-fold greater in war, it controls the expression and thus largely shapes the substance of national feeling and thought. Under such conditions the attitude of the press is conclusive evidence of the attitude of the government. Grumbach gives us direct evidence. He reprints notices sent April 24 and 25, 1915, by General Baron von Gayl, in command of the seventh army corps, to two Social Democratic journals. One of these had been guilty of opposing the annexation of Belgium, which, the general says, "wide circles of the nation regard as necessary." The other journal had characterized as "phantasies" utterances of Deputy Paasche regarding the possible acquisition of colonial and European territories, and had praised an essay of Professor Brentano, which, the general says, "in a discussion of the aims of peace, contains serious breaches of the party truce (*Burgfriede*)." Both journals are consequently notified, in identical language: "Since your attitude gives me no assurance for the future against offences of

the kind censured, I impose upon your journal the requirement of approval before publication.[1]

Under such conditions it is not surprising that few protests against annexations appeared in Social Democratic journals. Even the attitude of the "bourgeois" journals, which, with only three or four exceptions,[2] were openly annexationist, seems less conclusively indicative of public sentiment than of governmental policy.

The *Burgfriede*, which General von Gayl invoked, was supposed to bar party controversies during the war. Annexation, accordingly, was to him a party question. Discussion of the aims of the war (*Kriegsziele*) seems to have been specifically prohibited; but it does not appear that any German journal came into collision with the authorities by advocating territorial guaranties and securities.

In the governmental attitude towards memorials, petitions and resolutions of groups, associations and political parties, similar distinctions are noticeable. German newspapers, it is true, were not permitted to print the memorial of the six economic associations nor that of the professors. These were not regarded as suitable articles of export. Since, however, they were adapted to strengthen the German "will to victory," they

[1] Grumbach, p. 23.

[2] *Ibid.*, preface, p. i.

enjoyed unimpeded circulation throughout Germany as "confidential printed manuscripts." On the other hand, all printed copies of the protest of the New Fatherland Alliance were seized by the police. The Alliance itself was placed under such surveillance and exposed to such annoyances that it abandoned the attempt to hold meetings.[1] The petition and the resolutions of the German Peace Society were not allowed to appear in print; they were sent to members only in typewritten form. A pamphlet by its president, printed as manuscript, was excluded from the mails. All Social Democratic protests, except those that constituted part of the proceedings of the Imperial Diet or of state legislatures, were excluded from the press, and all copies discovered were seized by the police. Anti-annexation manifestoes and pamphlets, printed in Switzerland, were held up on the frontier. They were subjected, that is, to the same treatment as other anti-government literature, such as *J'accuse*.

The formal utterances of the German authorities, both in the Empire and in the single states, were guarded. At the outbreak of hostilities the em-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 409. The "Fatherland" part of its name appears to have been appropriated by a new political party of militarist and annexationist tendencies.

peror declared that Germany was not waging a war of conquest. This statement was periodically repeated by the civil authorities. On the other hand, both the emperor and his chancellor spoke repeatedly of "guaranties and securities." This phrase was launched by Bethmann-Hollweg in the Imperial Diet, May 28, 1915. It was received in the Diet and by the press as a declaration in favour of annexations. Against this interpretation the chancellor interposed no protest. On July 31, 1915, in an address to the German people, the emperor modified the phrase. The chancellor spoke of guaranties against any future military attack (*Waffengang*). The emperor demanded "the necessary military, political, and economic securities" for "the unimpeded development of our creative powers at home and on the free sea." In subsequent utterances the chancellor rejected the re-establishment of "old past conditions"; asserted that the guaranties to be demanded by Germany would increase with the duration of the war, that Germany's future position must be "unassailable," that her enemies were no longer to hold "sally-ports" in the East or in the West; and stated that Germany could not permit Belgium to be used by England or by France as a military base (*Aufmarschgebiet*), that

Germany must have "political, military, and economic security" against the reconstruction of Belgium as an "Anglo-French vassal state" or as a "military and economic bulwark against Germany," and that Germany could not "again expose the long-oppressed Flemish nationality to Gallicization (*Verwelschung*)."[1] The allusions to Belgium were taken to signify that this country was to be so divided as to separate the Walloon from the Flemish stock, and that both parts, whether formally annexed or not, were to be kept under German control. Colonial Secretary Solf stated in 1915 that Germany's colonial possessions must be maintained and increased "without prejudice to the possible acquisition of territory in Europe." The Prussian minister of the interior, replying in 1916 to a Social Democratic declaration against annexations, said:

> This declaration is not in harmony with the true spirit of the people in this heroic time; least of all will it be intelligible to the men who are fighting for us. . . . The German Empire must build with blood and iron the road to the attainment of its political destiny in the world.[2]

Neither individual covetousness nor national lust for conquest is peculiar to the Germans.

[1] Grumbach, pp. 5–8.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Even in this war writers and speakers in the countries allied against Germany have advocated annexations, some of which can hardly be viewed as restitutions. Grumbach, however, is quite justified in asserting that

> in no other country are annexations advocated in so immoderate a manner and so openly as in Germany, by the most influential political leaders, by great political parties, and by the best known university professors.

He might have added that in no other country has an annexation propaganda been encouraged by governmental authorities. He is equally justified in saying:

> And even if plans of annexation existed on a similar scale in other countries, which I deny, in estimating their danger we could not pass over the question, how far the military situation gives the single countries any practical possibility of making such annexations. . . . The reason why the peril of annexations demanded in Germany is for the moment so great, is that the German army has occupied Belgium, North France, and the Baltic provinces, and (in co-operation with the Austrians) Poland, Serbia, and Montenegro.[1]

And since his book was published, the Teutonic armies have occupied the greater part of Rumania and have overrun Venetia.

[1] Grumbach, p. iii.

V

The tendencies above examined and analysed were not the sole causes of the World War. As we have already seen, the influence that directly precipitated the war was that of the military authorities. Some of these desired war for its own sake. Those who had no such desire, or were unwilling to acknowledge to themselves that they were actuated by any such desire, felt themselves bound to hasten the war, because they believed it to be inevitable, because they thought, and not without reason, that the political situation in Russia, in France, and in Great Britain was exceptionally favourable to their designs, and because, in their opinion, the military superiority of Germany was greater at the moment than it would be later. They feared not only that their enemies would be better prepared, but also that it would be impossible to induce the German people to maintain an armament which, after forty-three years of peace, might well seem in excess of any real needs. Maximilian Harden, who usually reflects with accuracy the opinions that are tending to become dominant, wrote in 1913:

> The nation is unanimous in its complaints. Bismarck would never have made the mistake of asking for his country a military equipment sufficiently powerful to fight England, France, and the Slav masses, only to keep it unemployed during long years of peace.[1]

Later in the same year the smouldering discontent of the nation, fanned into flame by the arrogance displayed by the German military authorities in the Zabern affair, led to an interpellation in the Reichstag and to the adoption of a vote of censure by the remarkable majority of 293 ayes to 54 nays. When the Reichstag adjourned, May 20, 1914, the Social Democrats remained seated while the other deputies rose and cheered the emperor; and, when their attitude was reproved by the president, some of them shouted, "That is our affair," and tried to drown the cheers with hoots and hisses.[2] In the opinion of Ambassador Gerard, who was in Germany at the time and through the first years of the war, this episode did much to win the emperor's consent to the war.[3] It might well have disquieted a ruler who believed that "the only pillar on which the realm rested was the army."[4]

[1] Cited in *Jugés par eux-mêmes* (Paris, 1916), p. 42.
[2] Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, chapter iv.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[4] Speech of October 18, 1894.

There were also class interests in play. Besides the manufacturing interests, on which the Socialists, with their hostility to the capitalist system, lay exaggerated emphasis, there was the class interest of the landed aristocracy, and especially of the Prussian Junkers. These resented the rapid enrichment of the mercantile class, and saw in its growing wealth and influence a menace to the power and prestige of their own order. They were disposed to welcome a war in which the German military officers, who are drawn almost exclusively from the landed gentry, could exhibit their efficiency and reaffirm their importance. The gain would be theirs; the costs, if not defrayed by indemnities, would fall on their bourgeois rivals. The selfishness of their attitude and the meanness of their jealousy were masked even to themselves under a patriotic solicitude for the welfare of the nation, menaced by the corrupting and enervating influences of peace, prosperity, and luxury.

Dynastic and class interests, however, might not have been sufficiently strong or their representatives sufficiently unscrupulous to bring on the war. They certainly could not have carried the nation into the war with anything approaching the enthusiasm which the German people

displayed in August, 1914. Such enthusiasm can be awakened only by an appeal to emotions which all can share. The emotions to which appeal was made were fear and cupidity. "The Slav peril," persistently emphasized for years as the chief reason for increasing German armaments, had become, to the German artisans and peasants, a very real and present danger. Their fear predisposed them to accept the official legend of a Russian attack. Of even wider appeal, however, were the ambitions whose growth I have outlined; and if among the many influences that worked together for war any one can be regarded as the chief factor, it was probably the dream of world empire. National ambition, once aroused, appeals alike to sovereign and to subject, to men of every class and of every vocation. In the middle and upper classes it made a far stronger appeal than the Slav peril, which these classes were too intelligent to overestimate.

Except in its intensity and its extent, its apparent prevalence among all classes of the people, there is nothing really novel, nothing unprecedented, in the German land hunger. There is nothing new even in the theory of a mission. Again and again, in the history of the world, a nation that has been too successful in war, and

too easily successful, has developed lust for power and has sought to cover the nakedness of its ambition with the drapery of such a theory, with the assumption that its rule will benefit its conquered enemies. It was the mission of the Greeks to carry into Asia a finer civilization, as it was the mission of the France of Louis XIV to render a like service to central Europe. It was the mission of Rome to confer upon all peoples the boon of just and equal laws. The Empire of the Hapsburgs was charged with the duty of defending and diffusing orthodox religion. The armies of the first French Republic crossed the Rhine in order to free their neighbours from princely tyranny; those of the first Napoleon overran Europe to abolish feudalism and to establish legal equality; those of the third Napoleon went into Italy to complete this work and to establish the principle of nationality. Even in the United States, although it has never been a military power, the consciousness of latent military energy and of potential superiority in war has bred, at least in some minds, national ambition; and with ambition has appeared, from time to time, the perilous notion of a mission. Some of our countrymen have thought it our mission to secure the reign of law throughout Latin America—a

theory closely akin to that of Roman imperialism. Some are talking today as if it were our mission and that of our allies to compel our enemies to abandon monarchic government, as if we had entered and were waging this war, not to make the world safe for democracy, but to make it unsafe for monarchy—a theory indistinguishable from that which led revolutionary France, in passing from the defensive to the offensive, to establish on its frontiers a fringe of little republics—republics that afterwards fell, with France itself, into the hands of a military autocrat.

With us, however, these dangerous notions are sporadic, not general. In the existing world crisis we are glad that our allies stand, as we do, for popular self-government as well as for the reign of law. We feel that the establishment of democratic government in Germany would facilitate the conclusion of a lasting peace, lessen the peril of future war, promote international co-operation and place international law on a firmer basis. We see that this war has already strengthened the forces of democracy in every nation; and we believe that the triumph of the cause we have espoused will discredit military monarchy in Germany as in every other nation; but we did not enter nor are we waging this war in order to

force upon Germany or upon any other nation a change in its governmental system.

National land hunger, national illusions of a world mission, militaristic sentiment—these may appear sporadically, they may even become dominant, for a time, in any nation. Whether they are characteristic of any nation is a question of degree and of duration. In the case of nations as in that of individuals, all the traits and tendencies that constitute character are human. Differences of character result from different combinations of these universal traits or, in an older phrase, from the way in which "the elements are mixed." We may go further and assert that the seemingly new spirit, good or bad, which an individual or a nation exhibits in a crisis is usually marked by the further development of traits that were already strongly developed and by the suppression of other traits that were always less developed. It is all a question of degree. Insanity itself, at least in many of its forms, exhibits no traits that are not found in sane people: it is marked by the development of some trait or traits beyond the degree of variation which is sufficiently common to be regarded as normal. Men may be unreasonably suspicious of their fellows or unreasonably assured of their own importance and

yet be within the line of sanity, but exaggeration of either trait may amount to mania. From this point of view, it seems permissible to say that a nation may be at least temporarily insane. The fact that so many Germans, apparently most Germans, believe without evidence that they were about to be attacked by their neighbours suggests that the nation was afflicted by the mania of persecution. Another indication of a disordered national mind is the reiterated statement, made before as well as after the outbreak of the war, that no other nation is able to understand Germany. Couple with this the fact that German writers assert that Germans fully understand the psychology of other nations, that they alone have this capacity, and that this superiority qualifies Germany to direct the destinies of the world; add to this the apparent acceptance of these claims by most of their countrymen, and it seems quite justifiable to say that German national pride has developed into megalomania. The undoubted fact that some Germans are quite free from such hallucinations does not invalidate this judgment, for these sane Germans testify that the sentiments and opinions which they combat are general and dominant.

Granting that the dangerous tendencies that

have been so startlingly exhibited in the modern German mind have been discernible in other nations that have grown too powerful through war, that, from the historical point of view, these tendencies seem almost inevitable, let us not forget that history shows us how these tendencies have been counteracted. In the destruction that follows pride, in the nemesis that chastises ὕβρις, Hebrew sages and Greek tragedians found a divine retributive justice. Treitschke himself, writing not as a political theorist but as a historian, notes how Germany was punished, in the Thirty Years' War, for the effort of its rulers to revive Roman imperialism and to extend their power over other peoples. "In the merciless justice of history," he tells us, "those who lusted to rule the world were cast under the feet of the stranger."[1]

Nemesis, however, not only avenges, but also purifies. When victory has corrupted the soul of a people, defeat is salutary. In this sense we may accept Treitschke's famous saying: "The living God will take care that war shall always return as a terrible medicine for the human race."[2] In chastisement, religious sentiment has always found an exhibition, not of divine justice only, but also of divine benevolence. Today, as was

[1] *Deutsche Geschichte*, vol. i., p. 5. [2] *Politik*, vol. i., p. 78.

the case a century ago, when the allied Russians, Germans, and English overthrew Napoleon, the defeat of an empire may be the salvation of a people.

VI

Nothing short of a decisive defeat of Germany will secure the existence and development of the society of free nations. So often as this is imperilled by the ambition of a single power, there must be a general war; and every such war must be fought to a finish.

Deeply moved as we are by the havoc and horror of the war now raging,—a war that already has slain or crippled millions of men, has destroyed much of the fruit of centuries of peaceful toil and is casting upon generations yet unborn burdens that threaten to be unbearable,—earnestly as we desire its speedy ending, we yet believe that a bad peace would be a greater evil than this worst of wars. If military force, organized and perfected through half a century with unexampled persistency of purpose and concentration of effort, loosed suddenly and wantonly upon neighbours more peacefully minded and less fully prepared, directed, with deliberate disre-

gard of the customs and laws of modern warfare, not only against armed enemies but also against non-combatants and neutrals—if such force, so used, should emerge from this conflict with any appreciable advantage, with any gain of territory or influence, the peace that should register such a result would be a bad peace. It would rob the world of what is worth far more than goods or lives—faith in justice. Encouraging lawless aggression, it would sow the seeds of countless future wars.

We believe that the moment at which aggression, fully prepared, has secured its utmost probable gains in the occupation of neutral and enemy territory, the moment at which resources long husbanded for such aggression are beginning to fail, while the more peaceful nations, worsted by surprise, are now first attaining efficient organization of their larger populations and superior wealth, is not the moment at which a just and lasting peace can be secured.

That moment, we believe, will come only when right is victorious. From Belgium to Armenia right is still on the scaffold; from Brandenburg to the Bosphorus wrong is still on the throne. Peace patched up today could not but leave the moral issues of the war unsettled; and such a peace

could be nothing more than an armistice. Far better than such a peace is further warfare, to the end that those who have given their lives for national freedom and international justice shall not have died in vain.

Appendix

Correspondence with Theodore Roosevelt

APPENDIX

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THEODORE ROOSEVELT

When the first article in this volume was originally published, the author stated that, on the eve of the Spanish-American War, Mr. Roosevelt, at that time first assistant secretary of our navy, urged President McKinley to send out a fleet to meet and destroy the Spanish fleet without waiting for a formal declaration of war. This statement was based on the account given by John D. Long, *The New American Navy*, volume ii, page 174. Mr. Long, it will be remembered, was secretary of the navy in President McKinley's cabinet. It was in his absence, and as acting secretary of the navy, that Mr. Roosevelt was alleged to have made such a proposal. The author's citation of Mr. Long's statement led to the following correspondence.

Oyster Bay, Long Island, N. Y.
March 24, 1915.

My dear Professor Munroe Smith:

I thank you for your pamphlet on "Military Strategy versus Diplomacy." It is capital.

Will you allow me to make, however, a correction of fact, where you have very naturally been misled, in connection with your allusion to me? . . .

What I really urged President McKinley to do was to notify the Spanish government, when it was announced that it would send its battle-fleet into American waters, that, if they did so, we should treat the act as a declaration of war; and, if the battle-fleet then sailed, would then promptly attack it on the high seas. This of course is an utterly different proposition from the one related by Mr. Long; but from a conversation I had with him I gathered that he did not see that there was any distinction at all. I did not for some time see his book and thought that the statement he had made was in an address or something of the kind. I am now sorry that I did not give the facts in my *Autobiography*. . . .

Sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,
March 26, 1915.

MY DEAR MR. ROOSEVELT:

I thank you for your friendly letter of March twenty-fourth; and I am very glad to have your statement of the real nature of your proposal to President McKinley. I am sorry that I did not write you before my article went to press; but, besides the statement which I found in ex-Secretary Long's book, I had previously heard the same story from one of my elder colleagues, who himself had it from ex-Secretary of the Treasury Gage.

Although Mr. Long could see no distinction between the proposal you made and that which he thought you made, there is clearly a very marked distinction. If, as some of my friends have suggested, I expand my

article and publish it in book form, I shall of course accept your statement[1]; and I shall not again say that your proposal showed disregard of the opinion of civilized mankind.

At the same time, I shall probably still be disposed to treat the proposal you made as an example of the danger of subordinating political to military considerations. You would have treated the sending of the Spanish battle-fleet "into American waters" as a declaration of war. There are, however, no American waters in a national sense, except within the zone of coast-artillery fire. Spain had a clear right to send its fleet into any other waters in the western hemisphere. Had it sent its fleet to Cuba, as it later did, its action would have been purely precautionary. Had it sent its fleet in the direction of our coast, its action would have been minatory, but not hostile—as was ours when, as president, you sent our fleet across the Pacific. (This parallel may not be fully justified. I am not sure how far the sending of our fleet was minatory, or even monitory.) If in the Spring of 1898 President McKinley had adopted your advice, it seems to me that our conduct would have been like that of Germany in demanding Russian demobilization under threat of war. It would, at least, have been like treating concentration of troops as an act of hostility—a course which the not over-scrupulous Bismarck declared to be incorrect and unwise.

If in 1898 you had been President, I venture to doubt whether you would have followed the course which, as acting secretary of the navy, you felt bound to recommend.

[1] See above, p. 119.

In all such exigencies, however, men may very well be of different minds. In the Spanish war we took the aggressive after all, though not at the time or in the manner you wished. We finally declared war, as I understand, on natural-law grounds. We affirmed that the people of Cuba were, and of right ought to be, free and independent; thus coupling a statement contrary to fact with the expression of a disputable judgment. I wish we had based our intervention simply and solely on the ancient and incontestable right to abate a nuisance. If we had taken that ground, we should at least have been truthful. And if we have to go into Mexico, that is the ground on which we shall really intervene, and I hope we will say so.

Yours sincerely,

MUNROE SMITH.

OYSTER BAY, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.
April 10, 1915.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR MUNROE SMITH:

I wish I had received your letter before I saw you. You have given exactly the ground upon which I would have based our action in Cuba and on which I should base our action in Mexico. There are such things as "international right of eminent domain" and "international right to abate a nuisance"; but as nations practically do not join together to exercise either right by world action, the right has to be exercised at present by some particular nation—England as regards the Soudan; France as regards Morocco; ourselves as regards Panama, Cuba, and, I hope, Mexico.

I agree with your statement but not with your conclusion as regards the Spanish battle-fleet, etc. The Spanish action was minatory. It was a matter for our discretion to determine whether it was also hostile.

Sending the battle-fleet round to the Pacific by me was certainly monitory. It was minatory only in case some old-world power, as was possible, had herself decided to go to war. When I sent it round, I believed it would turn out to be what it was, the greatest stroke for peace that could be struck. But I was perfectly prepared to have it bring on war; and the admirals were warned to be just as much on their guard in every way against hostilities as if we were actually at war, and to be ready to fight on ten seconds' notice. If any old-world power had chosen to go to war, I would have accepted it as proof that she was merely waiting her chance to strike. In other words, in a case like this the circumstances must determine whether the power which does the minatory or monitory act is justified in so doing and whether the opposing power is justified in going to war. As regards either fact, the case may be one that requires war or may be one that forbids it. The circumstances must determine the action.

Faithfully yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

P. S. "You're a mark "Teddy"

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